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**CONTRIBUTION**

by

**Mrs Ewa POLKOWSKA**  
**Secretary General of the Senate of Poland**

to the General Debate on

**“Does your parliament allow its staff to undertake remote working?”**

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## **Does your parliament allow its staff to undertake remote working?**

- *Does remote working provide benefits to the organisation? What are the risks?*
- *What are the regulations in your parliament regarding remote working? For example, do you have a minimum number of days required in the office?*
- *Do you have some roles as Secretary General for which it is impossible to offer remote working, and how do you reconcile inequalities?*

### **General remarks**

The Chancellery of the Senate allows its employees to perform their official duties remotely, in accordance with the applicable legal regulations and taking into account the nature of the tasks assigned to them. A significant stage in the development of this working model was the COVID-19 epidemic, which substantially accelerated its implementation in many public institutions, including the Chancellery of the Senate. Within a short period, it became necessary to adapt the functioning of the office to new organisational conditions. In the face of the epidemiological threat, ensuring the continuity of the institution's operations while at the same time guaranteeing the safety of employees became particularly important. In practice, this meant transferring part of the duties to remote working and intensifying the use of digital tools in the day-to-day functioning of the office.

### **Regulations concerning the organisation of remote working**

When introducing remote working in the Chancellery of the Senate, particular attention was paid to establishing appropriate legal regulations and organisational procedures. It was crucial to ensure an adequate level of information security, as well as the proper organisation of the work of employees performing their duties outside the office premises.

During the COVID-19 period, remote working was regulated at the statutory level pursuant to the Act on special solutions related to preventing, counteracting and combating COVID-19, while in the Chancellery of the Senate its implementation was effected by way of an order issued by the Head of the Chancellery of the Senate. Currently, the primary regulation governing remote working is the Labour Code, which in the Polish legal system has the status of a generally applicable legal act. The detailed rules for performing remote work are set out in an agreement concluded by the Chancellery of the Senate with the in-house trade union organisations.

## **Conditions for undertaking remote work**

An employee of the Chancellery of the Senate may perform work remotely, provided that the nature of the employee's official duties permits this and that it does not disrupt the proper organisation of work of the organisational unit of the Chancellery of the Senate in which the employee is employed. In accordance with the provisions of the Labour Code, employees may make use of permanent remote working (full or partial), as well as so-called occasional remote working, not exceeding 24 days in a calendar year. Remote work may also be performed at the employer's instruction in two cases: in connection with the introduction of a state of emergency, a state of epidemic threat or a state of epidemic, or during a period in which the employer is temporarily unable to ensure safe and hygienic working conditions at the employee's current workplace due to force majeure.

In practice, the most frequently used form of remote working in the Chancellery of the Senate is occasional remote working, as confirmed by statistical data. The Chancellery of the Senate employs on average approximately 365 employees, of whom 145 made use of occasional remote working in 2025, for a total of 1,978 days. The average number of occasional remote working days in 2025 per employee using this form of work was 13. By comparison, 16 persons perform permanent partial remote work (1–3 days per week), while 20 persons work fully remotely.

In the Chancellery of the Senate, an arrangement with an employee regarding permanent remote work may be made during employment, either at the employee's request or at the employer's initiative, or upon conclusion of the employment contract. An application to perform work in this form is subject to an opinion by the director of the office responsible for the employee's place of employment and by the director of the organisational unit responsible for human resources. Consent to permanent remote work is granted by the Head of the Chancellery of the Senate.

## **Principles of performing remote work**

Before being allowed to perform remote work, an employee is required to submit a declaration confirming that, at the remote workplace indicated by the employee and agreed with the office director, safe and hygienic working conditions are ensured and that the employee has familiarised themselves with the occupational risk assessment, the principles of safe and hygienic remote working, and the procedures concerning the protection of personal data. The Chancellery of the Senate provides employees undertaking remote work with the materials and work tools, including technical equipment, necessary for the performance of

work, as well as technical support. In the case of permanent remote work and remote work performed at the employer's instruction, the employee is also paid a lump sum intended to cover the costs of electricity and telecommunications services necessary for remote working.

Monitoring of remote work in the Chancellery of the Senate is carried out primarily through the analysis of work results; in particular, employees performing work in the form of permanent remote work are required to submit, after the end of each month, reports on task performance containing a list of tasks completed in the previous month. An employee performing remote work confirms the commencement and completion of work by registering these events in the IT system. Internal regulations also provide for the possibility of monitoring the employee's log-ins to the IT network of the Chancellery of the Senate and, following prior arrangement with the employee, of conducting inspections at the place of remote work during the employee's working hours.

Remote working in the Chancellery of the Senate may be performed by employees holding managerial posts (directors and deputy directors), coordinating posts (heads of divisions), as well as advisory and specialist posts, including, among others, legal advisers, legislative drafters, the chief accountant and the data protection officer. This possibility is also available to employees in support roles. However, it should be emphasised that not all posts in the Chancellery of the Senate allow work to be carried out outside the office premises. This applies, among others, to technical support staff, catering staff, audiovisual staff, drivers, employees responsible for preparing, servicing and documenting sittings of the Senate and Senate committees, employees of the General Office, the Senate Archives and the Classified Information Protection Unit, as the nature of their duties requires their constant physical presence at the workplace.

Differences in access to remote working therefore result from objective conditions related to the nature of particular posts and not from unequal treatment of employees. In this context, communication and transparency are of key importance: the rules on remote working are explained to employees, and limitations resulting from the nature of particular posts are explained in detail by supervisors. As a result, no objections concerning unequal treatment in the context of access to remote working are raised to the employer.

### **Benefits resulting from the introduction of remote working**

The introduction of remote working in the Chancellery of the Senate has brought a number of benefits both to employees and to the institution itself. One of the most important

advantages is greater flexibility in the organisation of work. The possibility of performing duties from different locations supports more efficient time management and facilitates balancing professional and private life. A significant advantage is also the reduction of time and costs associated with commuting to work. In large urban centres, daily commuting can be time-consuming

and burdensome; therefore, the possibility of performing part of one's duties remotely significantly improves working comfort. An important element of remote working is also the use of modern digital tools supporting cooperation between employees. Video conferencing platforms, e-mail and the electronic document circulation system used in the Chancellery of the Senate enable the efficient performance of tasks even when employees carry out their duties remotely from different locations. Remote working may also contribute to a more rational use of organisational resources, including a reduction in the operating costs of the office, for example by cutting down on energy consumption and office supplies.

### **Challenges related to the introduction of remote working**

At the same time, it should be recognised that remote working is associated with certain challenges. One of the most significant is ensuring an adequate level of information security. Performing duties outside the office premises may increase the risk of cyberattacks. Contemporary threats, such as phishing or ransomware, may lead to data theft or to blocked access to IT systems. For this reason, the Chancellery of the Senate attaches great importance to compliance with cybersecurity principles. This includes, inter alia, the use of strong passwords, two-factor authentication, secure network connections (VPN), regular software updates and the use of appropriate security tools. It is also important to raise employees' awareness of the safe use of digital tools.

Another challenge related to remote working may be more difficult communication between employees and a potential weakening of team cohesion. The lack of direct contact in the workplace may, in some situations, hinder ongoing cooperation and the exchange of information. In addition, remote working limits the possibility of effective supervision and oversight by superiors over the performance of duties, which may make it more difficult to monitor progress and ensure an appropriate level of productivity. At the same time, it prevents a rapid response in situations requiring the immediate presence of an employee on the institution's premises. Therefore, an appropriate balance between remote working and work performed on the institution's premises is of significant importance for the efficient functioning of the Chancellery of the Senate.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, remote working has become an important element of the transformations taking place in modern public administration. The dynamic development of information technologies means that an increasing number of tasks can be performed using digital tools, without the need for an employee's constant physical presence at the workplace. The introduction of remote working in the Chancellery of the Senate constituted a response to changing technological and social conditions, as well as an element of the broader process of modernising the functioning of public administration. Experience shows, however, that in the case of the Chancellery of the Senate, the most effective solution remains a hybrid model, combining elements of remote working and on-site work. This makes it possible to maintain a balance between flexibility in the organisation of work and the need for direct cooperation within the team, as well as ensuring the ongoing performance of tasks requiring a presence on the employer's premises.