



## 07 – WORKER PRIVACY



Technology is an integral and often indispensable part of our lives. However, it can also be an intrusive part, especially where the workplace is concerned. Many employers and bosses contact employees outside of working hours. This means staff can never entirely switch off from work. The government in Portugal has taken steps to limit this incursion into the lives of workers. It has introduced a law that prohibits employers and bosses from contacting workers by email, message or phone outside of working hours. The law applies to companies with more than 10 employees. It states that any violation constitutes a "serious offense" and could result in financial penalties.

The Portuguese government has introduced the new privacy law after receiving a deluge of complaints during the coronavirus lockdowns. An increasing number of employees are now working from home remotely because of COVID-19. The research company Gartner estimated that remote workers will nearly double to represent 32 per cent of the global workforce by the end of 2021, compared to 17 per cent in 2019. Portugal's government said: "The employer must respect the privacy of the worker." The new law also requires employers to provide employees with the appropriate tools to work from home, and reimburse them with any costs incurred to assist with increased energy bills.