Project Proposal: Work-from-Home and Well-being in Europe

1. Select the Data

- Work-from-home trends (2014–2023): Eurostat Database – Percentage of employed persons working from home across European countries (Eurostat Work-from-Home Data)
- Quality of Life Indicators: Eurostat Quality of Life Database – Focus on Self-Perceived Health (Eurostat Quality of Life)

The data comes from Eurostat, a highly reputable and trustworthy European source, ensuring reliability and accuracy. It includes work-from-home trends (2014–2023), providing insights into the percentage of employees working remotely across European countries, as well as quality of life indicators, with a focus on self-perceived health. This comprehensive, multi-year dataset is contextually relevant, reflecting the evolving impact of remote work on well-being and societal dynamics. While the current data appears sufficient, the need for additional sources will be reassessed as the project progresses.

2. Explore the Data

This project will analyse work-from-home trends by measuring the percentage of employees working remotely per country from 2014 to 2023. The quality-of-life dimension will focus on self-perceived health, specifically examining data categorized by sex, age, and educational attainment level (hlth_silc_02). Additionally, a possible extension of this project could explore the environmental impact of remote work, looking at factors such as pollution levels, commuting trends, and transport emissions to assess whether increased remote work contributes to sustainability goals.

The work-from-home dataset, covering the years 2014–2023, allows for a long-term trend analysis before, during, and "after" the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some data points contain missing values, breaks in time series, or low reliability, which may impact trend consistency. There are also definition differences (d) in the 2023 data for some countries, which may influence cross-country comparisons. Also, some data points are entirely missing.

The self-perceived health dataset spans multiple years, making it suitable for long-term trend analysis. However, some countries exhibit breaks in time series (b), which could impact trend consistency. Additionally, some values in the dataset are estimated (e), especially for EU aggregates and specific countries (e.g., European Union - 27 countries), potentially reducing accuracy for certain years. Missing values also exist, particularly for Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which limits regional comparability. To ensure consistency in trend analysis, data adjustments or interpolations may be necessary.

3. Define the Audience

The primary audience for this project consists of policymakers, including EU and national-level labour ministries, as well as employers such as HR professionals and business leaders. These stakeholders play a crucial role in shaping regulations and workplace policies that could support flexible work arrangements. Additionally, employees and labour unions represent a secondary audience, as they can use the findings to advocate for stronger work-from-home rights and improved working conditions. Another relevant group includes environmental advocates, who may support remote work as a means of reducing commuting-related pollution and contributing to sustainability efforts. By providing evidence-based insights, this project aims to demonstrate

that remote work is a viable, beneficial alternative to in-office work, encouraging both policymakers and employers to adopt measures that promote well-being and work-life balance.

4. Identify the Main Point of the Story

Key Message:

> "*Remote work has positive impacts on quality of life—improving self-perceived health, strengthening work-life balance, and potentially reducing environmental harm. Policymakers and employers should support flexible work options as part of a sustainable and well-being-focused future.*"

During the COVID-19 lockdowns, many companies discovered that a wide range of office jobs could be performed remotely. This shift gave people more personal time, led to healthier habits (like increased exercise), reduced commuting hours, and significantly lowered traffic congestion—contributing to less pollution in already climate-conscious societies. However, as lockdowns ended, more and more employers began recalling workers to on-site offices. With this project, the goal is to emphasize that remote or hybrid work can remain a viable alternative to traditional, in-person office work, fostering both individual well-being and environmental preservation.

To illustrate the differences in remote work adoption across European countries over time, the infographic will feature a motion chart that animates the progression of work-from-home rates alongside quality-of-life metrics. This dynamic visualization allows a clear comparison between countries and highlights significant shifts in these trends, ensuring an intuitive, at-a-glance understanding of how remote work correlates with well-being. An example of this visualization is available here: amCharts Motion Chart. By highlighting these patterns, the infographic would aim to encourage both policymakers and employers to adopt or maintain flexible working arrangements that benefit workers' health and protect the environment.

If the data does not strongly support a link between remote work and self-perceived health, other factors can be explored. One option is the environmental impact, such as reduced commuting and lower emissions. Another is Overall life satisfaction, offering a broader measure of well-being despite limited yearly data. Initially, Leisure and social interactions seemed promising but only offer two data points (2015, 2022). Despite these limitations, incorporating environmental, life satisfaction, or social relations data could provide a more well-rounded view of remote work's effects on both individuals and society.