

# THE CULTURAL DIVIDE OVER 'WORKING HOLIDAYS'



To work or not to work on holiday? American, British and French workers are struggling to leave their work behind, a recent survey reveals.

We all enjoy certain perks in our work contracts and one that is highly desirable with workers of all kinds is paid holiday. In fact, a recent survey published by American consulting firm Mercer found that, in ten countries, people would rather have paid holiday than a retirement plan or even health insurance. This is not particularly surprising because surely we all want to get a little reward for our work and achieve a healthy work/life balance. What is surprising, however, is the attitudes of certain countries about working while on vacation.

**Hotels.com stated that the amount of holidays, both public days off and annual leave, are highest in Russia with 40 days** and that this is closely followed by Italy and Sweden with 36 days. Workers in these countries are quite likely to be offended by any notion of taking work with them, as would 73% of the Germans polled by Monster.com.

However this number drops significantly in France (35%), UK (39%) and North America (37%). **It seems that there is a big cultural divide with most Europeans refusing to work on vacation and American, British and French workers happy to make conference calls from the beach.**

The question that really needs to be asked here is not how many of these Americans, Brits and French are happy to work on vacation but whether they are right to do so. The idea would understandably offend many Europeans that enjoy the boundary between work and family time but it is becoming increasingly acceptable in other countries - despite the negative implications to their relationships with the family members they are meant to be spending time with, their mental health and their performance on returning to their actual workplace. Perhaps the Russians really do have the best attitude towards paid leave.

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