



Press Release

Brussels, 30 June 2021 (8.30 a.m. CEST)

KBC increases accessibility for customers in experiment with work on Sundays for KBC Live using voluntary teleworking

KBC has signed a collective labour agreement with ACV Puls for a temporary experiment with work on Sundays for KBC Live, exclusively using voluntary teleworking.

The experiment will run from January 2022 for eight months in Flanders and Brussels, after which there will be an evaluation with ACV Puls based on feedback from employees and customers. In the event of a positive evaluation, KBC intends to continue this service.

Through KBC Live (telephone, chat), KBC wants to be available on Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to offer its customers the same instant solutions for their questions as are currently offered through KBC Live at other times (8 a.m. to 10 p.m. during the week and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays). These solutions cover all areas of expertise: Bank-insurance, Insurance, Home, Business Solutions and Retail Wealth Management.

Customers expect easy accessibility

KBC has noticed that customers' expectations in terms of accessibility are constantly evolving, driven by their experiences in e-commerce and other retail sectors.

In addition, KBC has long observed that customers are also active on Sundays via digital KBC channels (website, Facebook, Messenger, Twitter, WhatsApp). Covid-19 provided a further boost to this changing customer behaviour. The customer increasingly initiates their interaction using KBC digital channels and may also need a chance to contact a real human from KBC during their customer journey. As a result, it is no longer the branch opening hours that determine the time of interaction, but rather the customer who chooses the time.

During the last year of pandemic, it became apparent that, thanks to teleworking, customer services could also be organised perfectly well within KBC Live. KBC wants to take that experience into the future.

KBC expects that as development continues on Kate, the personal digital assistant with 24/7 service, the need for remote human availability seven days a week will increase even further in order to respond to customer queries following proactive suggestions from Kate. This is why KBC wants KBC Live (telephone, chat, e-mail, Touch, social media) to be available on Sundays from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. to offer its customers the same instant solutions to their questions as offered via KBC Live at other times (8 a.m. to 10 p.m. during the week and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturdays), covering all areas of expertise: Bank-insurance, Insurance, Home, Business Solutions and Retail Wealth Management.

In recent weeks and months, KBC has given social dialogue with three trade unions every opportunity to reach an agreement on this issue. KBC proposed experimenting with the opening of KBC Live on Sundays and

public holidays. This experiment would be limited in time, based on absolutely voluntary participation by the employees, and there would be very generous compensation for the participants which could be received as both time and money. A final evaluation would then be conducted together with the trade unions.

At the same time, KBC has made sound agreements in many areas.

Nevertheless, KBC had to conclude that two of the parties were not prepared to accept the proposals made by KBC.

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This is why, in consultation with ACV Puls, KBC has taken an alternative route within the legal possibilities available, as verified by the competent government services. KBC has signed a collective labour agreement with ACV Puls for a temporary experiment with work on Sundays for KBC Live, exclusively using voluntary teleworking. All the concessions made during the discussions with the three trade unions were maintained.

The extra compensation for working on Sundays and public holidays will be 100%, free to be received as either time or money. As such, employees can flexibly choose between either more pay or more free time.

As part of the voluntary nature of the experiment, employees will be surveyed in advance as to whether they would be prepared to work on Sundays on a voluntary basis via teleworking and, if so, how often they would wish to do so. If it turns out that there are too few volunteers to provide the necessary service to our customers on Sundays, the experiment will not take place in this way.

The experiment will be thoroughly prepared, and KBC will inform and survey the staff involved extensively in advance.

The experiment will run from January 2022 for eight months in Flanders and Brussels, after which there will be an evaluation with ACV Puls based on feedback from employees and customers. (KBC in Wallonia has its own social dialogue).

In the event of a positive evaluation, KBC intends to continue this service.

This approach keeps jobs in Belgium. An alternative would have been for the work on Sundays to be done via a hub (branch) of KBC Live in the south of the Netherlands. KBC already has a branch in the Netherlands for its corporate clients.

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