MODULE 2 CASE STUDY · SPAIN

The pattern nobody agreed to



Meridiano Servicios, Valencia. One situation, four national versions. This is the Spain version.

The situation

You are the only HR person at a company of about forty people. Customer support is covered by five people working fixed hours from Monday to Friday. The operations manager wants to move them to a staggered pattern — two early, two standard, one late, rotating monthly — so that the working day is covered for customers in every country the company sells to.

She has asked you to "send something out this week" and to "keep it simple, it is only a small change".

Of the five people affected: two work compressed hours across four longer days; one has a fixed non-working Wednesday for childcare; one has told you, in confidence, that she cannot work early starts because of a caring responsibility she has not disclosed to her manager; and one has said nothing at all about it.

What this case study is for

Everything in Module 2 meets a real constraint here. The channel you choose, the order you do things in, what you can and cannot write down, and who has to be consulted before anyone is told anything. The same situation plays out differently in each of the four countries, and that difference is the point.

What is different in Spain

Before you use any of this

National detail below is a starting point for your own checking, not legal advice. Employment law changes, and thresholds differ by company size and by sector agreement. Verify the current position for your country before acting on any of it — Module 6 covers how to do that properly.

Employee representation: Comité de empresa or delegados de personal

What to check	Why it matters here

Co-funded by the European Union

Erasmus+ 2025-1-PT01-KA220-VET-000365831 · CC BY-SA 4.0

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Which representation exists?	Delegados de personal in smaller workplaces, comité de empresa above the statutory threshold. The consultation route differs, and so does the timetable.
Is this a substantial modification of working conditions?	A significant change to the schedule may fall under the Estatuto de los Trabajadores provisions on substantial modification, which carry a defined process and notice period. Check before you announce anything.
How does the change affect the working time register?	Daily recording of working time is mandatory. A staggered pattern changes what has to be recorded and how — raise it before go-live, not after.
What does the convenio colectivo say?	Sector and company agreements are central in Spain and frequently set schedules directly. The convenio may simply decide this for you.
Are any employees on a reduced-hours arrangement for care?	Reducción de jornada for caring reasons carries protections. Identify anyone affected before designing the pattern, not after.

How the communication itself differs

- Split working days remain common in some sectors. A staggered pattern may read very differently depending on what people currently work.
- The works council will expect to see the proposal in writing before the meeting, not during it.
- Regional languages matter in several communities. Ask whether the announcement needs to exist in more than Castilian.

Who to ask (draft, for partner review)

- The comité de empresa or delegados de personal
- Whoever holds the applicable convenio colectivo
- The Inspección de Trabajo y Seguridad Social for working-time register rules
- An employment lawyer or graduado social on whether this is a substantial modification

What you are asked to do

1. Decide the order of events. What has to happen before anything is communicated at all?
2. Decide what is written, what is spoken, and what is neither.
3. Plan the consultation: who is involved, in what forum, and on what timetable.
4. Draft the announcement that eventually goes to the whole company.
5. Decide what you do about the confidence you were told, without disclosing it and without letting it be ignored.

Co-funded by the European Union

Erasmus+ 2025-1-PT01-KA220-VET-000365831 · CC BY-SA 4.0

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.

Questions to answer

- The operations manager wants something sent this week. Is that possible in your country? If not, what do you say to her, and in what words?
- Which parts of this can be handled asynchronously, and which cannot?
- What would you put in a channel, what in a direct message, and what only in a conversation?
- The person who has said nothing may be the one most affected. How do you find that out without singling her out?
- If the change goes ahead, what is written down afterwards, and where does it live?

Read one other country's version

When you have finished, read the version for one country other than your own and answer this: what would you have to do differently there, and which of those differences is legal rather than cultural? Write your answer in your own notes. If you want to, share it in the module forum and read another learner's answer, but this is optional.

Before you finish

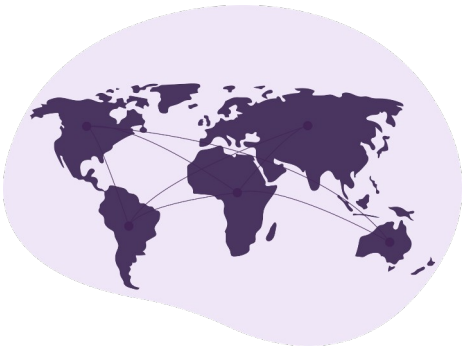
☐ You established what must happen before anything is announced, and it is not the same in every country

☐ Your timetable is realistic for the representation route where you are

☐ You said what you would tell the operations manager, in words

☐ The confidence is protected and its effect on the decision is still accounted for

☐ You read one other country's version and identified one legal and one cultural difference



Co-funded by the European Union

Erasmus+ 2025-1-PT01-KA220-VET-000365831 · CC BY-SA 4.0

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). Neither the European Union nor EACEA can be held responsible for them.