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'Game that you can't win'? Workplace Surveillance in Germany and Poland

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Author(s) Bronowicka, Joanna; Ivanova, Mirela; Klicki, Wojciech; King, Seán; Kocher, Eva; Kubisa, Julia; Zielińska, Justyna

Author(s) at UniBasel [Ivanova, Mirela](#) ;

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This report concludes a project about workplace surveillance in Poland and Germany with a particular focus on monitoring in call centres. In order to understand normalisation of surveillance technologies at work, we studied how this process is affected by legal norms, political discourse and attitudes of the call centre employees in both countries. We analyzed the German and Polish law following the coming-into-force of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). We also conducted in-depth interviews with call centre employees, as well as with experts from trade unions, employer's associations, and public institutions, who influence the political discourse on the topic. The interviews revealed that despite the recent legal changes, prompted by the introduction of the GDPR, experts from both countries still consider current legislation on workplace monitoring as too imprecise. We also found that call centre employees had very little awareness of their rights concerning privacy and data protection at work, and that their attitudes towards workplace surveillance varied greatly depending on their norms and values, as well as on the workplace conditions.

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