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A decently liberal move [1]

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The French government have just relaxed the strictures of the 35 hour work week and it's worth applauding this as a decently liberal move by them [3].

> French workers were in mourning yesterday for their cherished but controversial 35-hour week, after Nicolas Sarkozy's centre-right party pushed through an employment reform that effectively kills off one of the socialist era's defining policies.
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> The law, due to come into effect as early as August, will allow companies to decide how many hours and how much overtime their employees clock up every week. Instead of the current maximum of 218 days a year, white-collar workers could be expected to work as many as 235 days.
>
> Sarkozy, who was elected last year with the campaign slogan "work more to earn more", regards the 35-hour week as a major drag on the French economy, arguing that those who want to work more should not be stopped from doing so.

That the law had an effect on the economy is true, but I don't actually celebrate its passing on the grounds that the economy will now improve. The economy, after all, isn't everything (despite what people tend to think about people like me). No, I raise a cheer because of the point in that last line of the quote: it's an increase in freedom and liberty, which are to my mind everything.

Your or my work life balance is something that you and I, as free adults, should, and must be allowed to, decide for ourselves. My choice has been to do light work as a policy wonk, a theory being the worst thing I will ever wrassle with. Others prefer longer working hours and higher incomes, there are those who decide that life without a beach and a surfboard is not worth living. To each their own and it's certainly not the business of government to insist that we should work some maximum number of hours, just as it isn't their place to insist that we should work some minimum (with the proviso that we're not claiming benefits, of course). Of course, we've still not reached the perfect level of non-involvement by government in such decisions, we've a lot further to go yet.

But I do wonder, as with President Bush's question about whether French has a word for "entrepreneur", do they have a phrase that means the same as "*à chacun ses goûts*"?

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