



Comparative analysis of working time in the European Union

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The number of hours worked every week or year, and the way in which work is organised, are issues of central concern and interest to both employees and employers. In the case of employees, working hours have a direct bearing on standard of living, level of work–life balance and the overall sustainability of working life. For employers, working time is a key element in the calculation of costs, productivity and competitiveness. Working time, and its regulation, is likewise an important policy issue for national governments. This report, covering the 27 Member States of the EU and Norway, focuses on changes in working time and practices relating to the organisation of work over the period 2000-2006.

Introduction

Working time issues and practices – the volume of hours worked a week or a year, and the way that work is structured and organised – are central to the interests of individual employers and employees, but also to the workings of the economy and society generally.

At present, such [working time](#) arrangements in the enlarged European Union are evolving in a variety of ways, revealing both positive and negative experiences as employers, employees and, to some extent, governments, attempt to reconcile their various aspirations and expectations.

The pursuit of higher living standards remains an important goal of working people, especially in less prosperous countries, with inevitable consequences in terms of the numbers of people seeking employment, as well as the hours that they would like to work. However, such pressures are being tempered by the increasing desire to better reconcile [work-life balance](#) issues, as well as to achieve greater [equality between women and men](#).

Given the significant economic and social differences between Member States, it is hardly surprising that working time structures vary considerably between countries, with differences evident not only in overall patterns of working time, but also in the pace, and in some cases even the direction, of change. Despite these apparent differences, however, some strong underlying relationships exist in all countries between annual working hours, weekly hours and the relative importance of part-time working.

This report focuses on changes in working time, and practices relating to the organisation of work, in the 27 Member States of the EU (EU27) plus Norway from 2000 to 2006.

Focus of report

The report addresses the following issues:

- the duration of working time, covering annual hours worked, average weekly working hours and days worked a week;
- the relative importance of full-time and part-time employment, in terms of the incidence of each form of employment, average working hours and gender balance;
- the organisation of working time, with a focus on the [flexibility](#) of working arrangements, especially from the perspective of employees;
- the main concerns of trade unions with respect to working time issues.

Methodology and data

Data and information sources

The report draws on data from various sources together with questionnaire-based reports from national correspondents of the [European Working Conditions Observatory \(EWCO\)](#) network, who had already been provided with the relevant background data.

The first data source is the annual EU Labour Force Survey (LFS) which collects data on average hours worked by men and women in both part-time and full-time employment, on the proportion of

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men and women working part time, and on the relative number of men and women employed under different working time arrangements (including by means of an ad hoc LFS carried out in 2004).

A second data source is the national accounts for EU countries, compiled by [Eurostat](#), the Statistical Office of the European communities. These accounts include data on the total annual hours worked, as well as the number of people in employment, from which it is possible to derive data for average annual working hours.

The third source of data used is the Fourth European Working Conditions Survey ([EWCS](#)), conducted by the [European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions \(Eurofound\)](#) in the autumn of 2005, which reports on a range of quantitative and qualitative aspects of working time. In particular, data have been taken from the EWCS concerning non-standard work practices, work schedules, and the organisation and flexibility of working time arrangements.

Presentation of evidence

When research findings are presented for all EU27 Member States, it is a common practice in social policy work to group countries in certain ways, most notably in terms of some variant of the Esping-Andersen typology – essentially derived from a categorisation of national welfare systems, grouped on a geographical basis.

Thus, in the fourth EWCS report (Parent-Thirion et al, 2007), groups of countries are classified as follows: Continental, Ireland and the UK, eastern European, southern European, Scandinavian (including the Netherlands), acceding countries, candidate countries, and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries. Other research and policy reports may use alternate terms or formulations – such as Nordic, Anglo-Saxon, eastern European, or Mediterranean countries – but the coverage and categorisation are essentially similar.

The introduction to the fourth EWCS offers various justifications for the country groupings. These arguments seem valid enough: the practical difficulty of analysing and reporting data for a large number of countries; the fact that these groups are familiar to European policymakers; and that they appear to fit at least a superficial description of the issues concerned.

Useful as these a priori categorisations are, however, they risk pre-judging situations, or encouraging the reader to interpret evidence in ways that may not be justified. For this reason, the academic authors of Eurofound's recent gender perspective report '[Working conditions in the European Union: the gender perspective](#)', based on an analysis of the findings of the fourth EWCS, have questioned the empirical appropriateness of such a methodology. Their report concluded that 'little evidence exists that any of the country groupings which have been used for other purposes have succeeded in producing homogeneous groups with regard to gender and working conditions'.

The practical response of the authors of the gender report to this problem was to restrict themselves, on a whole, to an analysis of data aggregated for all EU27 Member States, with individual country differences addressed only in a relatively limited number of cases. However, as the purpose of this report was to compare differences in structure and development of working time between Member States, based on the views of national correspondents and the available data, such an option was not possible.

In deference to the arguments deployed in the gender perspective report, while recognising that there is a need for some form of categorisation, for this report it was decided to group the EU27 Member States (plus Norway) not on the basis of a conceptual notion, but on the basis of a common comparative quantitative measure of working time. In this regard, the measure of choice is average annual hours worked in the different countries.

This approach has two disadvantages. First, average annual working hours is not a concept that is commonly used in everyday discussions on working time. Secondly, it may be seen by some researchers as having an overly economic bias in an area of work where industrial relations considerations often dominate discussions.

However, it has the important attraction of providing a comparative quantitative framework concerning working time, within which more detailed data and experiences concerning its component

elements – such as weekly hours worked, the patterns of part-time and full-time working, as well as qualitative evidence on work organisation – can be viewed, compared and related.

On this basis, therefore, countries have been classified under five broad headings:

- Group 1: countries with the longest average annual working hours (1,900 hours or more), which includes Greece, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Estonia;
- Group 2: countries with above average annual working hours (1,800–1,900 hours), which includes Latvia, Ireland, Romania, Cyprus, Lithuania, Italy and the United Kingdom;
- Group 3: countries with average annual working hours (1,600–1,800 hours), which includes Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Finland, Austria, Bulgaria and Spain;
- Group 4: countries with below average annual working hours (1,500–1,600 hours), which includes Luxembourg, Sweden, Belgium, Denmark and France;
- Group 5: countries with the shortest annual working hours (below 1,500 hours), which includes Germany, Norway and the Netherlands.

Inevitably, border-line cases emerge, with the UK, for example, at the lower end of the group of countries with above average annual working hours and Sweden with an average of just over 1,600 working hours a week. Moreover, some data – notably for Bulgaria – may not be reliable, and the actual position of a country may not be accurately represented.

As revealed in further analysis, however, the countries within these groups are far from homogeneous in all respects. For instance, some significant differences can be found in working time patterns and practices between countries with almost similar levels of annual working hours. Nevertheless, the framework remains a useful, and reasonably neutral, way of beginning such a comparative analysis.

Working time developments in the EU 2000–2006

Declining working hours – a compositional phenomenon

Average annual hours worked by employees in the EU are estimated by Eurostat to have fallen by just over 2% over the period 2000 to 2006 – from 1,722 to 1,686 hours a year, a reduction of 36 hours. However, almost all of this reduction took place during the first two years of the period, when EU economic growth slowed following the downturn in the United States (US) in 2001.

At the same time, average weekly hours worked are estimated by the EU LFS to have fallen by 1.6% over this same period, implying a slight decline of about one day in the average number of days worked a year. Meanwhile, the overall proportion of men and women in work, but only working part time, increased from 16.4% to 18.1% over the six-year period.

The reduction in average weekly hours was not so much because people switched from full-time to part-time jobs, however, but because a substantial proportion of the net additional number of people entering employment took on part-time jobs, the majority of whom were women. The LFS data show that some 41% of the increase in employment achieved between 2000 and 2006 was accounted for by people taking up part-time jobs. In fact, over the period 2000–2006, average hours of both male and female full-time workers remained constant – at 42.9 and 40.1 hours respectively. However, the average hours of part-time working men fell from 20.1 to 19.4 hours, while those of women rose from 19.9 to 20.1 hours.

In other words, the overall reduction in average hours worked observed over the first six years of the current decade, whether weekly or yearly, is essentially a compositional phenomenon – the consequence of an increase in the number of people working part time compared with those working full time rather than any progressive, across-the-board, average reduction in hours worked by all those in employment.

Differences between Member States

The above evidence on average working time movements across the EU as a whole conceals significant variations in the experience of individual Member States. Such differences reflect, in particular, variations in the levels of economic development as indicated by gross domestic product

(GDP) per head of the population or GDP per hour worked, given that pressures to work long hours tend to be highest in countries with relatively low levels of productivity and incomes.

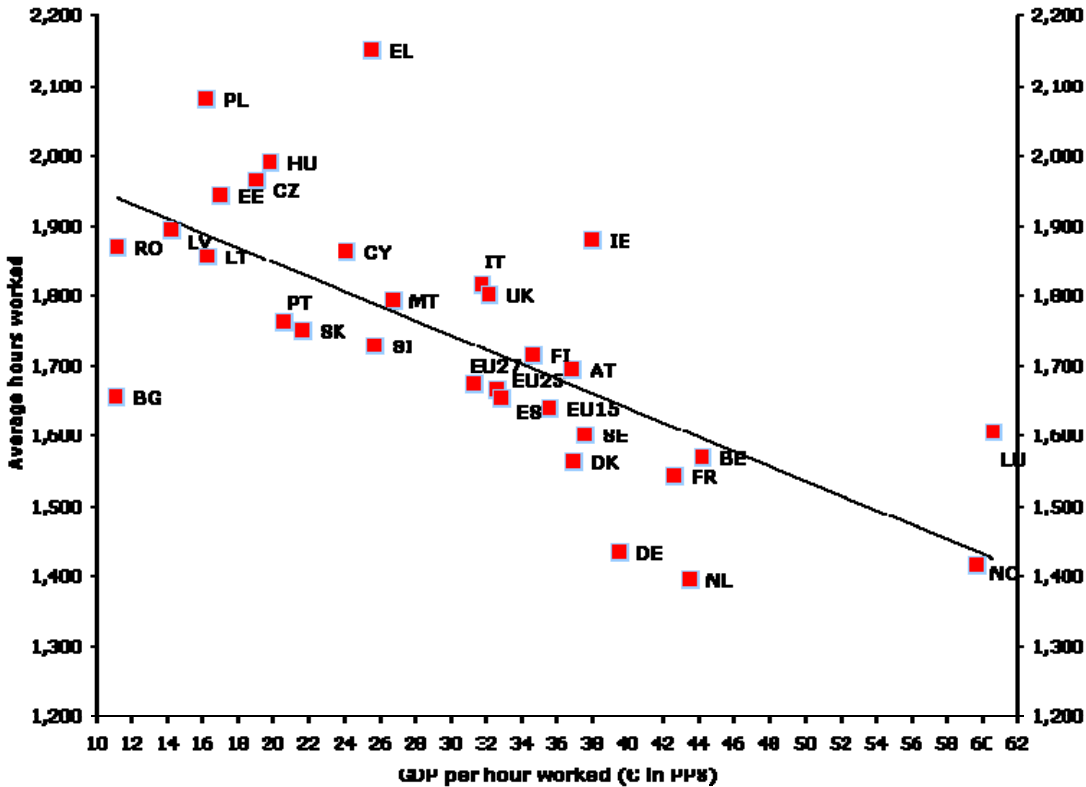
At the same time, the detailed cross-country evidence presented in this report shows that variations exist in the way that working time is organised between countries with similar levels of development. Nevertheless, quite systematic relationships can be found between annual and weekly hours worked, and the extent of part-time employment.

Duration of work: average annual working time

Average annual hours worked in 2006

Evidence on average annual hours of work in 2006 (Figure 1) suggests that workers in countries with higher levels of productivity (as measured by GDP per hour) tend, on average, to work fewer hours a year than workers in countries with lower productivity levels, with a high statistical correlation of .693 (rising to .754 if data for Bulgaria are excluded).

Figure 1: Average annual hours worked and GDP per hour worked, by country, 2006 (€ in PPS)



Average annual hours worked and GDP per hour worked, by country, 2006 (€ in PPS)

Notes: PL – Data for average annual hours refer to 2007 instead of 2006 because of a break in the series. PPS = purchasing power standards. See also Annex 2 for further details on the duration of work and annual working time for each country, as well as the relevance of annual working time in debates and bargaining in each country. Annex 8 provides a full list of country codes and abbreviations.

Source: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2006

Two groups of notable ‘outlier’ countries are evident in this respect. On the one hand, in Germany and the Netherlands, workers work fewer hours than would be predicted on the basis of their levels of

GDP per hour, which suggests a biased preference for leisure over income. On the other hand, Ireland, Greece and Poland have longer working hours than their levels of GDP per hour would predict, suggesting a biased preference for income over leisure.

Changes in annual hours

The (inverse) relationship between average annual working hours and level of economic performance (as indicated by productivity per hour worked) is strong, as shown by the cross-country comparison summarised above. Nevertheless, changes in annual working hours over the period 2000–2006 do not indicate any obvious or significant convergence between Member States in terms of working time. Despite this, there has been some convergence in economic performance with, for example, relatively higher productivity rates in the new Member States (NMS) that joined the EU in 2004 than in EU15 countries over this period.

As regards developments in the different country groups, a reduction in annual working hours larger than the average reduction can be found in all groups – that is, in countries with working hours above average as well as below average. In countries with the longest annual working hours, two out of five countries (Hungary and the Czech Republic) saw annual working hours fall faster than the EU average, while among those with above-average annual working hours, in five out of seven countries (the UK, Ireland, Italy, Latvia and Cyprus) the decline was also more than the EU average.

Among those countries with close to the average level of annual working hours, three out of six countries (Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain) experienced a larger decline in working hours than the EU average. For those countries with below-average annual hours, three out of five countries (Sweden, Luxembourg and France) saw a larger decline in working hours. Even the countries with the shortest annual working hours (Germany, the Netherlands and Norway) had above-average reductions in annual working time compared with the EU as a whole.

In terms of the experiences of the NMS, the evidence is varied. In Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia and Latvia, annual working hours fell by more than the EU average, while in Poland, Lithuania and Estonia, average hours increased. Likewise, in the new Mediterranean Member States, average annual working hours fell significantly in Cyprus, but rose markedly in Malta. In both Bulgaria and Romania, there seems to have been relatively little change. With regard to Bulgaria, the data may understate average annual hours worked since they are out of line with data on average weekly hours, while in Romania data are only available for part of the period of reference.

It is clearly not easy, even unwise, to attempt to draw strong conclusions from evidence that shows, for example, that, while there were above-average reductions in annual working hours in the Czech Republic, Cyprus and Hungary, where annual hours worked were well above the EU27 average, there were also reductions on a similar scale in Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway – countries where average annual working hours were well below that average. It is also dangerous to try to offer ad hoc explanations. Thus, the question remains regarding which of the diverse and specific economic, social, political and legal developments that affect these issues in individual Member States are the most important in the short term.

However, in so far as the reduction in average working hours is seen by many political parties and academics to be an important social policy objective, evidence of a lack of recent consistent convergence between different groups of countries – ordered in terms of their average levels of annual hours – is obviously disappointing. Equally disappointing in this regard is the evidence that in eight countries – Greece, Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta and Poland, but also in Belgium and Denmark – average annual working hours actually increased over the period, if only slightly in some cases.

Relevance of annual working time measure

While the concept of annual working hours may be relevant for such a comparative analysis, it is not necessarily the key statistic when viewed by stakeholders or commentators in most Member States, where the focus of interest still tends to be on the length of the working week. Only in a few countries is there evidence of a significant concern with annual working hours in current political debate and [collective bargaining](#).

These countries include, notably, Finland and Denmark, but with the issue being put on the table by employers, rather than by employees or their representatives, as part of their case against further working time reductions. In neighbouring Sweden, however, the issue of annual working hours – which had been much debated earlier in the current decade – no longer attracts attention.

In a number of Member States – notably the NMS – while discussion on annual working hours is reported as being almost entirely absent, widespread interest is nevertheless noted concerning annual holiday entitlements and related arrangements, which are important, if rather inadequately documented, components of annual working hours.

The focus and content of these discussions varies a great deal, however, between Member States. For example, in Hungary, the tradition of creating longer holidays by swapping workdays and weekend rest days close to holidays is now the subject of debate. Meanwhile, in Lithuania, amendments to the Labour Code in 2007 increased the number of rest days coinciding with statutory holidays, although this failed to stop actual average annual hours from rising over the period 2000–2006. In Malta, trade unions are contesting an employer-backed government measure designed to reduce the number of public holidays. In Slovakia, it is reported that [collective agreements](#) have seen increases in holiday entitlements above the statutory minimum, despite no significant change in the number of public holidays.

Outside the Nordic countries and the NMS, the link to annual hours is equally varied. In both Ireland and the UK, collective agreements covering annual hours do exist. However, in the case of Ireland at least, these are reported as being related to specific professions – such as train drivers or prison officers. In some other countries – Austria and the Netherlands being examples – while annual hours may provide some form of framework for social partner discussions and negotiations, the focus of attention has been elsewhere, such as on the number of weeks worked a year in the case of Austria, and on the number of hours worked a week in the Netherlands. In France, legislation on the 35-hour working week increased the focus on annual hours worked (specifically on the annualisation of working time for contractual purposes) in order to introduce more flexibility into working time arrangements with, for example, 35 hours a week being averaged over the year instead of being rigidly applied each week.

Duration of work

Average weekly hours worked

Over the period 2000 to 2006, average weekly hours worked, as recorded by the LFS, fell by 1.6%. During the same period, the average reduction in annual working hours recorded in the EU national accounts database was 2.2%, implying a marginal reduction in the number of days worked a year. Nevertheless, a relatively close association could be identified between changes in average weekly hours worked and changes in average annual hours worked across the Member States over the period 2000–2006, with the correlation coefficient being 0.68. This suggests that the main reductions were in average weekly hours rather than in days worked a year, or, at least, that reductions in the two tended to coincide.

It is notable, however, that overall differences between Member States with respect to changes in average weekly hours are much lower than with respect to changes in average annual hours. In particular, there were fewer exceptions to a downward movement in average weekly hours – the four cases being Poland (no change over the period), Austria (a 2.1% increase explained by a substantial increase in the number of hours worked by full-time workers), Bulgaria (similar explanation, although the data are less concrete) and, perhaps surprisingly, France (where a significant increase – to over 38 hours a week – is attributed to systematic overtime working, including the acceptance of ‘inactive’ periods when counting working hours, such that the actual time spent at work is increased).

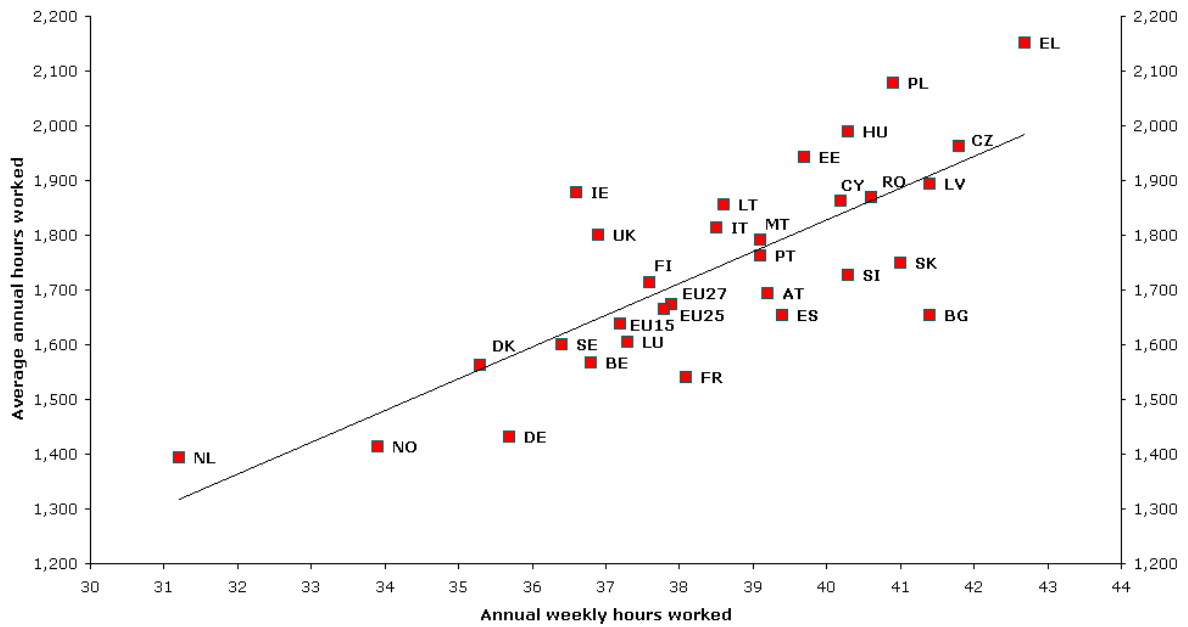
Overall, the decline observed in average weekly working time over the period 2000–2006 has done little if anything to reduce differences between Member States. Average weekly hours still averaged over 41 hours a week among employees in Latvia and Romania in 2006, compared with less than 35 hours a week in both Denmark and Germany, and just 30 hours a week in the Netherlands.

With regard to the expectation of a convergence between Member States – that is, a more rapid decline in weekly hours in countries with relatively higher annual working hours (or lower GDP per head) – there is little evidence to present. On the contrary, percentage reductions in average weekly hours worked have tended to be larger in countries with the shortest annual working hours (Germany 3.8%, Norway 4.2%) or in those with annual hours around the average level or below (Malta 3.7%, Slovenia 3.1%, Slovakia 3.8% and Luxembourg 3.9%) than in countries with the highest annual hours. One exception in the case of the highest annual hours is the Czech Republic, which experienced a reduction of average weekly hours of 4.1% over the 2001–2006 period, but all of which was accounted for by a major reduction in average weekly hours between 2000 and 2001 followed by a slight increase after that.

While the focus of public discussion remains on average weekly working hours, the data for 2006 reveals a close relationship between average annual hours and average weekly hours, with the correlation coefficients being 0.76 to 0.81 (excluding Bulgaria) (see Figures 2 and 3). In this case, most of the countries that had average annual hours that were above the level that might be expected on the basis of their weekly hours of work compared with the EU average – that is, countries above the indicated regression line in Figure 2 – were the NMS (along with the UK, Ireland and Greece). This suggests that the number of weeks or days worked a year was greater than average. At the same time, workers in 12 of the EU15 Member States tended to work somewhat fewer annual hours than might be expected from the average relationship (as indicated by the regression line), suggesting that annual days worked were less than average.

The basic, numerical explanation for these differences is the number of holidays, or more correctly, the number of days not worked in a year. In other words, those employed in Germany, France, Spain, Slovakia and Slovenia (and possibly Bulgaria, although the data may be unreliable) tend, on average, to work fewer days (or have relatively more non-working days, or holidays, a year) than the EU average of workers who work the same weekly hours. On the other hand, workers in Ireland, the UK, Estonia, Poland, Hungary and Greece tend to have fewer days off or holidays than the EU average for workers who work similar weekly hours. In other words, in countries where average weekly hours are relatively long, the number of days worked a year also tends to be relatively high, and conversely, the number of holidays less, while the reverse is the case for countries in which average weekly hours are relatively short. There is, accordingly, no tendency for long weekly working hours to be compensated by longer holidays, or for shorter weekly hours to be compensated by fewer holidays.

Figure 2: Average weekly and annual hours worked, by country, 2006

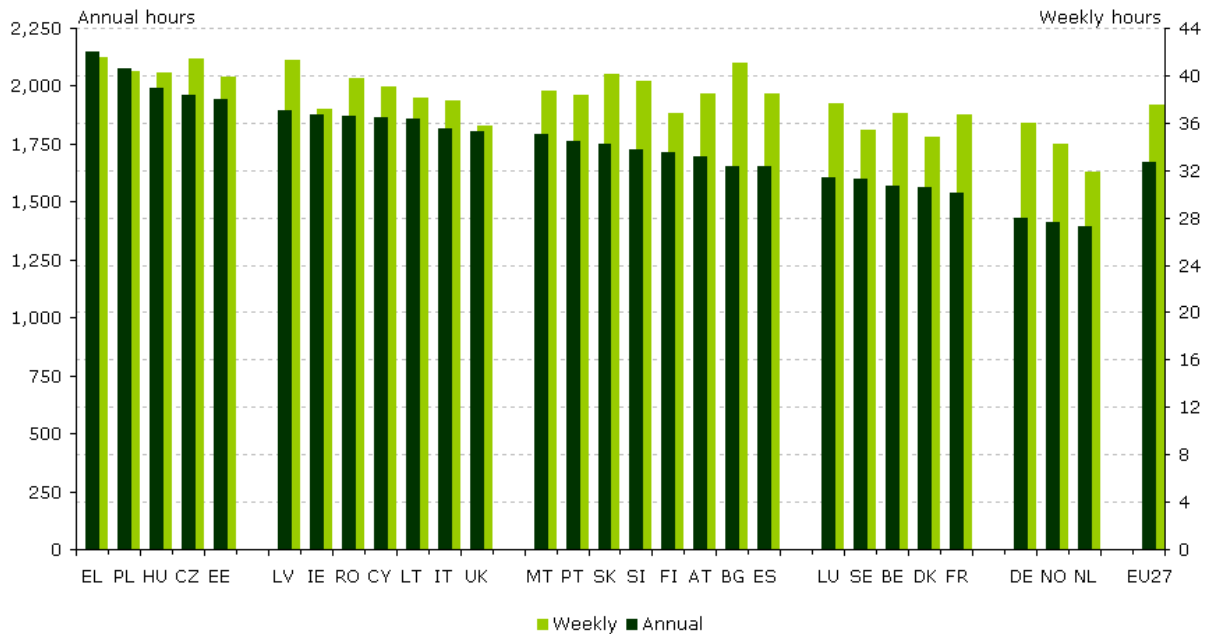


Average weekly and annual hours worked, by country, 2006

Note: PL – Data for average annual hours refer to 2007 instead of 2006 because of a break in the series. See also Annex 3 for further details on average weekly hours worked for each country, as well as developments and trends at national level.

Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2006

Figure 3: Average weekly and annual hours worked, by country, 2006



Average weekly and annual hours worked, by country, 2006

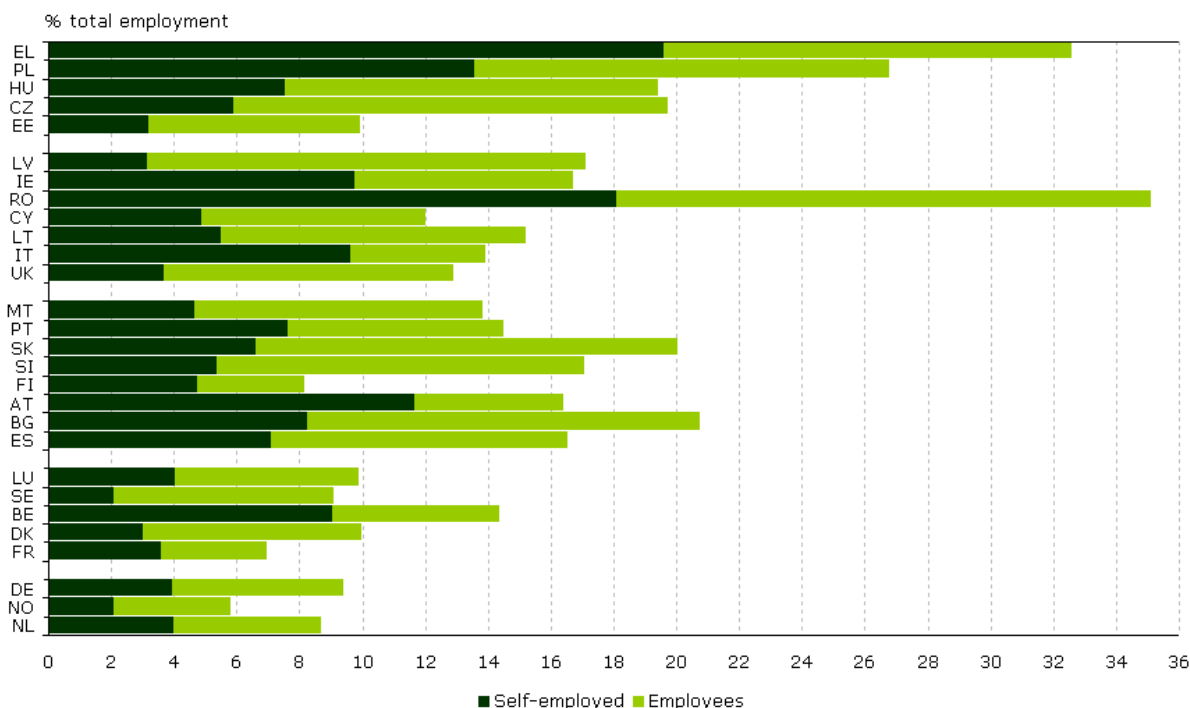
Note: PL – Data for average annual hours refer to 2007 instead of 2006 because of a break in the series. The left vertical axis denotes annual average working hours, while the right vertical axis reflects average weekly hours. See also Annex 3.

Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2006 and national accounts

Long weekly hours of work

In the EWCS, long working hours are defined as 48 or more hours a week, with some 15% of those in employment in the EU27 recorded as working such hours in the 2005 survey. Less than 10% of the workforce worked more than 48 hours a week in the Nordic countries, the Benelux countries (except Belgium), Germany and France. Countries where the shares of people working 48 hours or more exceeded 15% include most of the NMS (where the proportions of self-employed persons relative to employees tend to be below the EU average, except in countries where agriculture is important such as in Poland and Romania, in particular) plus Greece (with a higher share of self-employed workers, mainly employed in agriculture) (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Proportion of people working over 48 hours a week, by country, 2005 (% of total employment)



Proportion of people working over 48 hours a week, by country, 2005 (% of total employment)

Note: See also Annex 3.

Source: Parent-Thirion et al, Fourth European Working Conditions Survey, 2007

Across Member States, the proportion of people working long weekly hours shows some similarity with those working long annual hours. The longest hours are worked in Romania and Poland as well as Greece, where some 30%–35% of those employed worked 48 hours or more, followed by four of the other NMS – Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovakia – where the figure was around 20%.

On the other hand, the proportion of people working such long hours does not seem to be largely different between countries with average annual working hours and those with above-average annual hours. The largest difference can be found between those two groups and the two groups of countries with the lowest and next to lowest annual working hours where, again, the differences between the two groups are small.

The explanation lies in the relative long hours worked by self-employed persons, who account for a large proportion of those working long weekly hours but who, in general, do not constitute a large enough group to have a major effect on average working time. Overall, in the EU, therefore, over 50% of those working 48 hours a week or more are self-employed, even though they only account for 16% of total employment. To the extent that they are ‘genuine’ self-employed people, this is often explained as a form of self-exploitation which may be somewhat different from the circumstances faced by employees working excessive hours. However, employees may also be pursuing self-employment ‘voluntarily’ in order to raise total income, especially if hourly wages are low.

Men tend to work longer hours at the workplace than women by a ratio of 2:1, with long hours being a particular feature among self-employed workers in agriculture, hotels and restaurants, the wholesale and retail trade, together with construction and other services.

Countries where self-employed workers account for significantly more than the EU average of 50% of those working long hours include Austria, Belgium and Finland, where the proportion of self-employed workers make up closer to two thirds of those working long hours. This is also the case in

Greece and Italy, although self-employed workers in these countries make up a much larger share of the workforce – 35% and 25% respectively.

The relatively buoyant labour market of recent years and concern over labour shortages, whether actual or prospective, appears to have weakened policy efforts to reduce working time in a number of countries. However, as noted above, reductions in annual hours have been greatest in the countries which already have the shortest annual working hours – namely Germany, the Netherlands and Norway.

Moreover, while health concerns surrounding long working hours remain an issue, the main report summarising the 2005 EWCS findings suggests that there can be compensations – half of those working more than 48 hours a week are in the top three income deciles, including senior managers who stand out from other occupational groups in this respect. In addition, as mentioned above, long hours may also be worked in order to compensate for low rates of hourly pay for those at the lower end of the occupational and skill distribution.

Impact of EU Directive on working time

The EU Working Time [Directive 93/104/EC](#) that came into effect in 1993 (modified in 2003 through [Directive 2003/88/EC](#)) is judged to have raised the level of awareness and debate about working time issues in some countries, notably in Ireland and the UK. However, it is widely reported by other national correspondents as having had little or no effect in reducing working hours in practice.

This view is held not only by those countries that had, or considered that they had, equivalent or superior legislation – the Benelux countries and Norway, in particular – but also by social partners and analysts in many of the NMS.

This does not, of course, necessarily mean that the legislation has had no effect, although the data on long hours of work are not encouraging. What the data do suggest, however, is that the issues and concerns surrounding working time have evolved in more complex ways, and that the focus on a single goal is now seen as less relevant for current labour market concerns.

Part-time working

In addressing the issue of part-time work, it is important to be clear about the concepts and measurements being used. This analysis focuses on two sets of data: the average weekly hours worked by those men and women who are classified as working part time, and the proportions of all men and women working part time.

Average weekly hours of part-time workers

In terms of average weekly hours worked by those classified as working part time, the average hours worked by women in 2006 (20.1 hours) were somewhat higher, but not significantly, than they were for men in the EU as a whole (19.4 hours). Average weekly hours worked by part-time workers in the NMS were somewhat higher than in the former EU15, but the differences between women and men were minimal: 22 hours compared with 22.2 hours.

Average hours worked by men working part time in 2006 varied considerably between Member States: in Romania, they work 28 hours a week; in Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Luxembourg, about 24 hours a week; 17 hours a week in Norway and Germany; and less than 15 hours in Denmark. However, it should be noted that the number of men involved in part-time work is relatively small, except in the Netherlands.

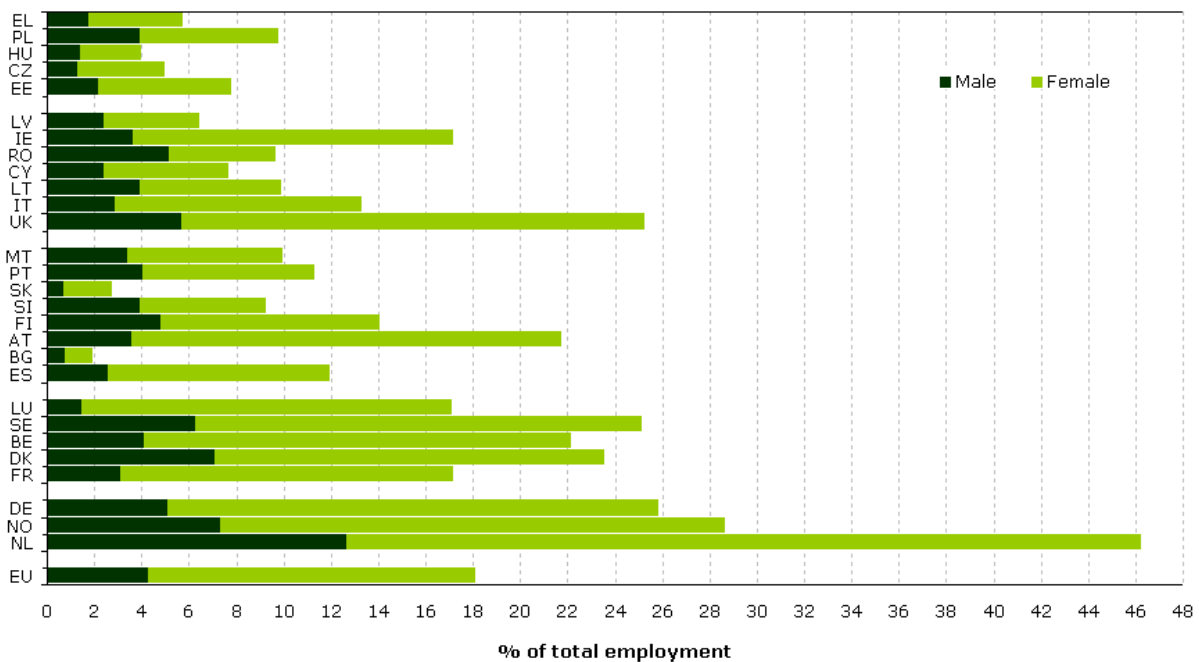
For women, working hours in EU15 Member States appear to be more polarised between countries: with Sweden in the lead with 26 hours; followed by Belgium and France with 23 hours a week on average; to Spain, Portugal, Germany and the UK, with well under 20 hours on average. Part-time working hours in the NMS, including Romania, Hungary and the Czech Republic, were among the highest, but with most other NMS close to the 22-hour average for these countries.

Proportions of workers working part time

The importance of part-time working depends on both the average hours worked by part-time workers – which, as described above, are not very different between Member States, at least for women – and the proportion of the workforce actually working part time in each Member State – which varies significantly.

In these respects, it is important to recognise that, while the proportion of men working part time rose somewhat more than it did for women between 2000 and 2006, the gender gap remains wide. Overall, 18% of total employment in the EU is made up of part-time work (Figure 5). However, 31% of women in employment worked part time in 2006, compared with less than 8% of men.

Figure 5: Proportion of part-time workers, by country and gender, 2006



Proportion of part-time workers, by country and gender, 2006

Note: IE data refer to 2005. See also Annex 4 for further details on the incidence of part-time working among men and women in each country, as well as government initiatives to support part-time work.

Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2006

Such gender imbalances exist in almost all Member States, but with some significant differences in their extent.

Several features stand out in this regard:

- the very high proportion of working women who work part time in some EU15 Member States – almost 75% in the Netherlands, about 46% in Germany, over 42% in the UK, 41% in Belgium, 40% in Austria, 40% in Sweden, 36% in Luxembourg, 35% in Denmark, over 30% in France and Ireland, over 26% in Italy, as well as 45% in Norway;
- the low and variable proportions of men working part time compared with the proportions of women – in the Netherlands, some 23% of men work part time (a ratio of 1:3 compared with women), followed by 13% in Denmark (1:3 ratio), nearly 12% in Sweden (1:3.5 ratio), over 10% in the UK (1:4 ratio), but only 6.5% in Austria (a ratio of 1:6);
- the low levels of part-time working in most NMS, involving 10% or less of working women in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia and Bulgaria and 3% or less of working men in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Bulgaria. Among the former EU15,

Luxembourg (2.6%) and Greece (2.9%) stand out in terms of low levels of part-time work. Malta stands out among the NMS with 21.5% of working women employed on a part-time basis, which is not far below the figures in Italy and Spain.

Explanations of these differences, as described by the national correspondents, are numerous, covering social and cultural traditions and attitudes, the economic interests and practical possibilities of both employers and employees, as well as the extent of legislative, political and trade union support for part-time work.

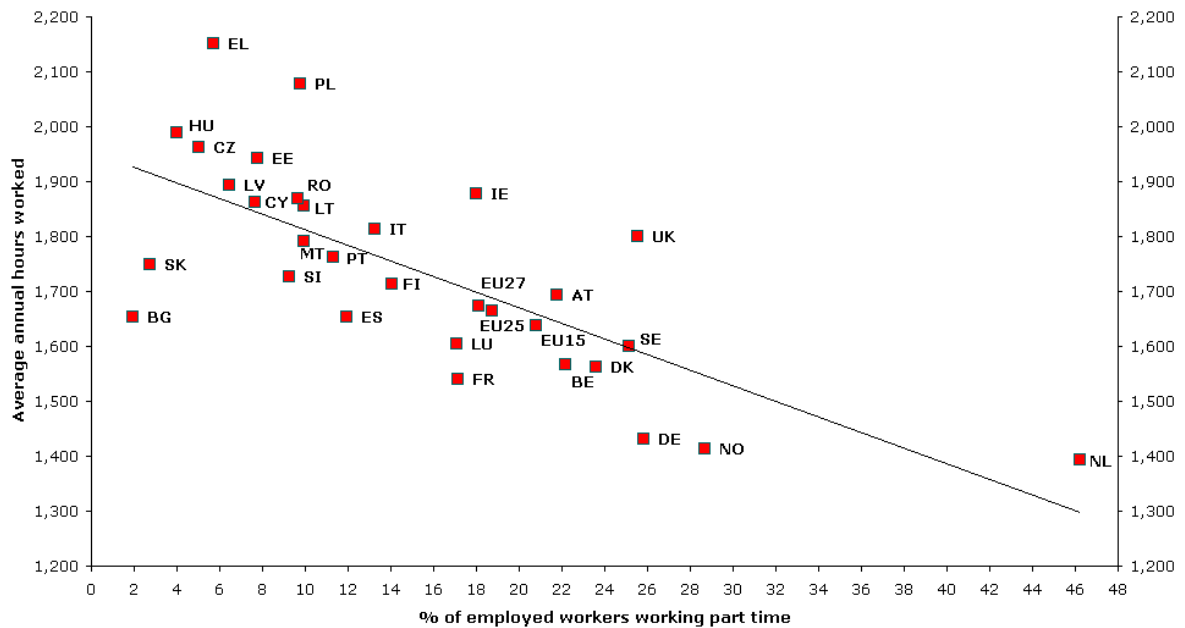
Part-time working in relation to annual and weekly working hours

While the extent of part-time working appears to be influenced by a range of factors, there is nevertheless, across the EU Member States, a close relationship between average annual hours and the proportion of employed people working part time – with a correlation coefficient of -0.71 (-0.76 excluding Bulgaria). The larger the share of people working part time, therefore, the shorter average annual working hours tend to be, which is perhaps to be expected. However, other factors, in particular the number of hours worked by those employed full time, can potentially offset the effect.

‘Outliers’ in this respect include the UK, Ireland, Poland and Greece, which have relatively high levels of annual working time given the proportion of people working part time, as well as Slovakia, Spain, France, Germany and Norway, which have relatively low levels of annual hours given their number of part-time workers (Figure 6). This suggests that the annual hours worked by full-time workers are longer than average in the first group of countries and shorter than average in the second country group.

Differences between countries in the average annual hours worked, as noted above, tend to be wider than variations in the average weekly hours. Accordingly, a close relationship can be identified between the proportion of people employed part time and average weekly hours worked (with a correlation coefficient of -0.93). The extent of part-time working, therefore, explains the differences across countries in average weekly hours worked, and differences in the length of the ‘standard’ working week are only a small part of the explanation.

Figure 6: Proportion of employed workers working part time and average annual hours worked, by country, 2006



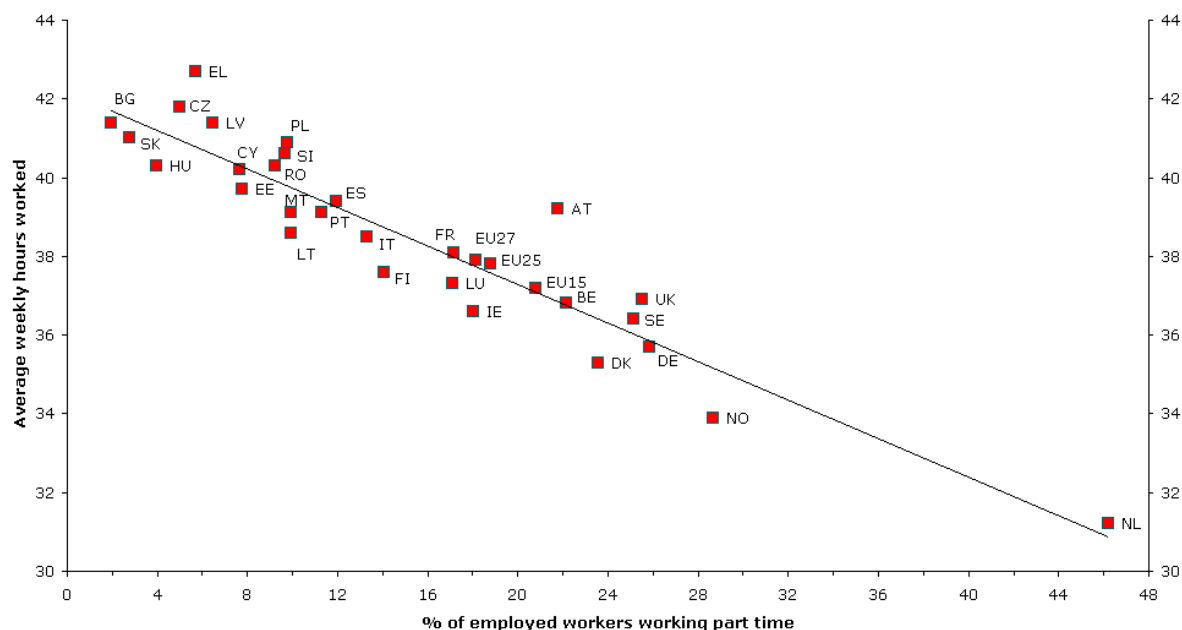
Proportion of employed workers working part time and average annual hours worked, by country, 2006

Note: PL – Data for average annual hours refer to 2007 instead of 2006 because of a break in the series. See also Annex 4.

Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2006

Thus, it appears that the extent of part-time working – notably the proportion of people working part time, since any variance in terms of average hours worked by part-time workers in different countries is relatively low – is closely related to differences in both the average annual hours worked and average weekly hours worked (see Figures 6 and 7).

Figure 7: Proportion of employed workers working part time and average weekly hours worked, by country, 2006



Proportion of employed workers working part time and average weekly hours worked, by country, 2006

Note: See also Annex 4.

Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2006

Public policy concerning part-time work

All EU governments have signed up to the [European Employment Strategy](#), which specifically encourages more part-time working as a means of getting more people, especially women, into employment. Yet, the success of policy measures or incentives to increase the amount of part-time working appears to depend more on the supply side of the labour market – whether actual or potential employees are seeking part-time work – rather than the quality of the policy measures themselves.

This is particularly obvious in low-income countries, where actual or potential employees appear to want full-time rather than part-time employment in order to compensate for low hourly rates of pay. Thus, it is hardly surprising to find a limited take-up of schemes designed to encourage part-time working. This appears to be the case in Greece, for example, where 10-year-old legislation allowing part-time working in the public sector has been only seldom used in practice. Likewise, in Hungary, where legislation allowing subsidies for part-time working has been in place since 1991, the take-up rates of schemes – for example, to support part-time working by parents on childcare leave – are reported to be very low.

Thus, a lack of explicit supporting policies or measures from governments – as reported, for example, by correspondents in the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania – should probably not be seen as a major explanation of low rates of part-time employment. Indeed, governments that limit their policy activities in this area may simply be behaving rationally, if they consider that the demand for such work is currently limited.

Where measures are taken, however, they are notable for their diversity. In Malta, the government has provided a range of tax incentives and established a public employment register in order to support the development of part-time work. Meanwhile, the Czech Republic is seeking to use part-time work as a way of increasing participation rates among groups that are disadvantaged or find it more difficult to compete in the labour market and accordingly have low participation rates – such as older workers and

those with disabilities. Cyprus has introduced measures that aim primarily to attract women into the labour market who are currently economically inactive.

While these types of actions are being taken where there are low rates of part-time employment, evidence of opposing changes can be found in some countries with high rates of part-time work. For example, in Austria and the Netherlands, the policy stance regarding part-time work has become more negative, with a specific change to the national legislative framework in the case of Austria which gives part-time workers the right to premium rates of pay for overtime work, thereby making part-time work less attractive to employers. In Denmark, the government is seeking to tighten the rules on access to unemployment benefits for those working part time so as to encourage more full-time work.

The potential benefits of part-time working in terms of improving the flexibility of the labour market and production processes, or in terms of improving the scope for a better work–life balance, are clearly much more appreciated in high-income economies. These benefits are also welcomed by employees on higher incomes and by more sophisticated or high-level employers seeking to improve their image – a factor specifically mentioned by correspondents in Spain – and able to organise more complex patterns of work.

Finland has pioneered part-time retirement schemes for full-time workers aged 58 years or more, with a part pension of 50% of the difference between regular and part-time earnings. A similar approach has been adopted for older workers in Slovenia, but more specifically as a way of coping with health problems or partial disability of workers.

Working time flexibility

Working time flexibility can take various forms for employees – from being able to alter their work schedules or the hours they worked, to being able to ‘bank’ hours or days of work in order to take time off at a later stage – all within the framework of working time management arrangements at their place of work.

There is clearly interest in flexible working arrangements on the part of many members of the workforce, most notably, but far from exclusively, from those with family responsibilities. However, not all of the flexibility options on offer are seen as positive. For instance, complaints have been reported by several correspondents – including those in high-income countries like Austria and the Netherlands, as well as in lower-income countries – that the interests of employers too often dominate those of employees. Further information on flexible working in each country is presented in Annex 6.

Autonomy in organising working time

In terms of the autonomy of employees with respect to their working hours and the degree of control they have over working time, significant differences emerge between Member States, with such differences, broadly speaking, inversely related to living standards and average annual working hours.

However, cultural and social factors, notably the nature of the relationship between employers and employees, including the role of trade unions, also intervene strongly. Overall, it is possible to place Member States in three broad groups:

- the Nordic countries – with 60% of employees able to exercise some control over their working time;
- the northern Continental countries plus Ireland and the UK – where 40% of employees report the possibility to influence their working time;
- the Mediterranean and eastern European countries – where only 25% of employees consider that they have the possibility to organise their working time.

Flexible working time organisation

In terms of flexible working time arrangements, the LFS ad hoc survey in 2004 provided some additional evidence of their prevalence across 20 of the EU25 Member States prior to enlargement in 2007 (the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Sweden were not covered), which can be added to that available from the 2005 EWCS. With respect to the 25–49 age group covered (chosen as having the greatest potential need for flexibility because people in this group are most likely to have

children to care for), less than 25% of those surveyed had any real flexibility in the hours they worked, in terms of varying their work schedules, or in terms of ‘banking’ hours or having working time accounts. Indeed, from these results, a lack of flexibility appears to be almost the norm in Mediterranean countries and most NMS.

In general, this survey confirmed that higher-skilled and professional employees had more flexibility than others in organising their working time, with public sector jobs for the most part offering more possibilities to influence working time than private sector jobs. Some of these issues, notably in relation to labour market flexibility generally, are explored further in the secondary analysis on flexibility based on the findings of the 2005 EWCS – [‘Employment security and employability: A contribution to the flexicurity debate’](#) (Pacelli et al, 2008).

Specific working time organisation

Non-standard hours

The 2005 EWCS reported that the proportion of people working outside ‘normal working hours’ – including working evenings and nights, or on Saturdays and Sundays – has decreased slightly compared with the position a decade ago. Nevertheless, the survey finds that some 45% of employees work some evenings in a typical month, and some 20% work some nights.

Differences in the number of workers undertaking evening work are not particularly significant between countries. Perhaps surprisingly, more employees in the Nordic countries work some evenings than in other regions of the EU, although the numbers of those working more than five evenings a week are highest in the Mediterranean Member States, together with the most recent and poorest NMS, Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the EU in 2007.

In terms of non-standard (atypical, unsocial or simply ‘odd’) hours of work, distinctions can also be made between sectors of the economy where such working hours are largely unavoidable, such as healthcare or the police service, and sectors where they suit employers and also consumers, such as retailing, and yet others, where the employer simply wants to make more intensive use of capital in order to improve profitability. Practices vary considerably between countries, however, depending as much on lifestyle preferences as living standards. For example, almost half of workers in Germany report that they never work on Saturdays, and over 80% of respondents report that they never work on Sundays.

In other countries, however, variable work arrangements are more common, and opinion surveys from countries as diverse as Ireland, Malta and Slovakia suggest that working non-standard hours is not necessarily inconvenient for people’s lifestyles. At the same time, the issue of shop working hours continues to be a point of conflict between the social partners in Belgium, Germany and Greece.

Work schedules

In the 2005 EWCS, more than half of workers, including employees and self-employed workers, report that they work the same number of hours each day, with the same start and finish times, and for the same number of days a week. Interestingly, however, this is slightly less than the levels reported a decade earlier, suggesting that there has been some increase in ‘flexibility’ measured in this way.

In general, some 75% of workers work the same number of days a week, with relatively little variation between Member States. In terms of flexibility of work schedules, however, there is much greater diversity. The EWCS report compares, for example, the situation in Nordic countries (plus the Netherlands), where 55% of workers work variable hours and 47% have variable start and finish times, with comparable figures of 33% and 38%, respectively, in Mediterranean countries.

Moreover, although the notion of a standard working day or working week appears to exist in most Member States, what it means in practice can vary considerably between countries. In the Czech Republic and Latvia, for example, work can typically start at 07.00. Similarly, climate plays a significant role in determining hours of work in Mediterranean countries, including the extent of weekend and evening work in tourist-related activities.

Banking of working hours and other practices

Two factors seem to determine the presence or absence of facilities for ‘banking’ working time or maintaining working time accounts:

- levels of economic development, with possibilities for working time accounts reported as very limited in the NMS, not only in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries like Hungary and Poland, but also in Mediterranean countries like Cyprus and Malta;
- the general approach to social partnership and business management, with a strong contrast between the Nordic countries, where arrangements for working time accounts are commonplace, and Italy and Spain, where they are not.

The presence of flexible working arrangements in potentially ‘favourable’ circumstances – that is, where income levels are high enough to permit this choice – nevertheless seems to depend to a large extent on the national business culture. In particular, it depends on the willingness of management and workers to use legal possibilities (for example, the ‘banking’ of hours, which is possible under the French working time reduction law, but is seldom used) or to try innovative ideas (such as a 36-hour working week made up of four nine-hour working days, as in Austria, or encouraging older workers to remain in the labour market for longer by offering them the possibility of working three weeks and then taking one week off, as in Finland).

At the same time, Belgium can be seen as an example of a country with high living standards, and a strong social partner tradition, where there is reported to be a preference for working fewer days a week, rather than fewer hours a day. At the same time, employees in Belgium particularly dislike working to variable work schedules set by employers. In the Netherlands, it is reported that working time accounts are not common, although they are sometimes used to meet seasonal variations in workloads.

Alongside differences between Member States, the possibility for employees to bank hours varies considerably by skills level and gender, as well as by sector. In the EU25 in 2004, 28% of women employed as managers, professionals or technicians had working time accounts or flexible working time arrangements, compared with less than 12% of women in skilled manual occupations. Such differences are similar, but more pronounced, for men, where 39% of those in the higher categories of employment had flexible working time arrangements or working time accounts, compared with 16% of those in skilled manual jobs. Similarly, the extent of such flexibility also varies across sectors, with the greatest flexibility recorded in public administration; however, flexibility in Lithuania is reported to be greater in the private than the public sector.

Trade union concerns regarding working time

A fundamental and long-standing trade union objective is to achieve a progressive reduction in working hours, most commonly measured on a weekly basis, through both collective bargaining and the passing of legislation.

However, some achievements – notably in establishing target norms in terms of average weekly hours – appear to have allowed or encouraged trade unions to concentrate more on the other traditional priority of pay levels. At the same time, trade unions are addressing emerging concerns – such as part-time working, holiday arrangements, work organisation and the flexibility of working time generally – as the structure and gender composition of the workforce evolves (see Annex 5 for further information on trade union views).

Working time and pay

Concerns about pay are clearly strongest in less prosperous countries, notably among the NMS with the longest annual working hours. In those countries, the need to raise income levels can even bring trade unions to agree to long working hours, provided the hours worked (especially overtime hours) are duly rewarded – a concern in Romania, for example.

In countries at the other end of the annual working time scale – those with below-average or the lowest annual hours – somewhat divergent tendencies are evident. In both Denmark and Sweden, it is reported that there is now more of a focus on pay than on further reductions in working hours, and on

support to enable those working part time to have opportunities to take up full-time employment, if they so wish and if the possibilities arise.

While there is continued trade union pressure for shorter working hours in Germany, in the Netherlands there is now apparently some interest in allowing those who wish to work longer hours to do so, while still maintaining the nominal 36-hour working week.

In EU countries with annual working hours between these two extremes, there is a continued trade union emphasis on reducing average working time, but with greater immediate concerns regarding specific working time practices or arrangements in individual Member States. For example, these issues relate to: establishing a four-hour minimum work 'shift' for part-time working in Finland so as to avoid the working time being split between, for instance, two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon; or negotiating financial compensation in Slovenia in return for greater flexibility regarding shop opening hours, including on Sundays and holidays.

Overall, the evidence points to mixed trade union priorities regarding working time. These reflect, to some degree, different economic circumstances across Member States. Furthermore, they also reflect changing social and cultural attitudes, such as in Italy and Spain, where the desire to improve work-life balance appears to be displacing previous priority concerns to reduce annual working hours.

In Belgium, campaigns to reduce working time and promote work-sharing are seen as a thing of the past. Despite this, working time remains an important trade union issue at company level, not least because national regulations after the introduction of the 38-hour working week allow considerable scope for sectoral or workplace-level negotiations.

Attitudes to part-time working

Trade union support for, or interest in, part-time work is generally weak or absent in countries with the highest annual working hours, because of the priority attached to pay. Indeed, trade unions are commonly seen as hostile to part-time working, even though their positions are generally more nuanced and complex in reality.

Undoubtedly, negative concerns are evident notably in the NMS, but also in Member States such as Germany and the Netherlands, where the spread of part-time working was traditionally seen as weakening trade union bargaining positions and as developing in practice in ways that adversely affect the pursuit of [gender equality](#).

On the other hand, the passing of the EU part-time work directive of 1997/1998 ([Directive 97/81/EC](#)), which became operational in 2000, appears to have softened trade union opposition everywhere. This is most notable in countries like Ireland and the UK, where successful efforts have subsequently been made to recruit part-time workers rather than oppose the development of their types of jobs.

Conclusions

This report is based on an analysis of comparable EU27 employment and productivity data for the period 2000 to 2006, using Eurostat and EWCS sources, and a set of questionnaire responses from informed national experts of the EWCO network, covering the EU Member States, along with Norway.

The report confirms similar conclusions to those expressed in a 'Study on the impact of working time: final report', published by the European Commission in January 2007 (Hogarth et al, 2007). For example, it reaffirms that 'the major changes currently taking place in relation to working time relate to its flexible arrangement rather than its duration' and that there is 'significant variation in working patterns and regulation across Europe'.

However, this current study offers some additional insights as it covers all EU27 Member States, rather than the 11 countries (eight 'old' and three 'new' Member States) covered by the Commission study. It also goes into greater depth in terms of data analysis and draws on the expertise of national experts from each Member State. Despite these positive elements, it lacks specific workplace case studies of the kind included in the Commission study.

Main findings

Average annual hours worked per person employed in 2006 varied considerably between Member States – ranging from over 2,100 hours a year in Greece and Poland to under 1,500 hours in Germany, the Netherlands and Norway – and these levels are rather highly (inversely) correlated with levels of hourly productivity.

Average levels of annual or weekly working hours appear to have declined over the period 2000–2006 – by 2% in the case of annual hours, and 1.6% in the case of weekly hours. However, these average changes need to be treated with caution. Average weekly hours worked by those in full-time employment, and by those in part-time employment, showed virtually no change over the period, when considered separately, with the overall average decline being due to an increased share of part-time workers in total employment during a period of rising employment levels.

Average weekly hours worked by part-time male and female workers amount to around 20 hours, with the number of hours worked by women slightly higher than the number for men. Women's average weekly working hours vary somewhat between Member States, with average hours in the NMS totalling about 22 hours. Working hours of men vary much more, but this has only a limited impact on the overall average working hours since only 8% of men work part time compared with over 31% of women.

There is little evidence of any significant convergence between Member States in terms of average annual or weekly working hours over the period 2000–2006. Indeed, the three countries with the shortest annual hours in 2000 – Germany, the Netherlands and Norway – all had above-average reductions in average annual working hours compared with the EU as a whole. At the same time, however, annual hours actually increased over this period in Austria and Belgium, as they did in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Lithuania and Malta.

Some 15% of those employed in the EU27 in 2005 were reportedly working 48 hours or more a week. In general, this figure is split equally between employees and self-employed workers across Member States, although the extent of long hours varies between Member States. Only in the Nordic countries, the Benelux countries (except Belgium), France and Germany do the number of people working 48 hours or more a week account for less than 10% of total employment.

In terms of working time flexibility, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- increased working time flexibility is seen as desirable by many employees, especially those with family responsibilities, but the extent to which it is available to workers is limited in many Member States. Moreover, the kinds of flexibility on offer are sometimes seen as reflecting the needs and interests of employers more than employees;
- the proportion of people working outside 'normal working hours' has only decreased slightly compared with the position a decade ago and considerable differences can be found between Member States. Some differences can be expected – such as the fact that evening work is more common in the Mediterranean Member States – but the incidence of working outside normal hours is also relatively high in Nordic countries. Germany stands out in terms of low levels of weekend working;
- the potential for employees to control or influence the organisation of their work varies between Member States, with the greatest opportunity to do so in the Nordic countries – where some 60% of workers consider that they are able to exercise some control – compared with only 25% in the Mediterranean and eastern European Member States;
- the opportunity to take advantage of flexible working time arrangements varies significantly within countries, as well as between them. Highly-skilled and professional workers having much greater possibilities to work flexible hours than manual workers, with more opportunities in general for those in public sector employment;
- the possibility to 'bank' working hours or maintain working time accounts is a particular method of achieving working time flexibility. Once again, there is a strong contrast between the situation in Nordic Member States where working time accounts are commonplace and Mediterranean countries where they are not. A major determinant of working time accounts appears to be the management 'culture' and the extent of social partnership in each country. However, persons in

non-manual jobs are more than twice as likely to have the opportunity to ‘bank’ working hours compared with those in manual jobs.

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Annexes

Annex 1 – Methodological issues concerning the categorising of Member States

In order to handle data for the EU27 Member States, many analysts – including the authors of the fourth EWCS report – choose to categorise countries along social welfare lines, following the concepts of Esping-Andersen. These categories can be useful when analysing some issues, but they tend to stereotype countries. They may be less successful at explaining differences in working hours in so far as they understate or distort the importance of other factors, notably average income levels.

As a practical alternative, and in order to avoid simply listing countries in alphabetical or some other arbitrary order, this report sought to place Member States in five broad groups, based on their average levels of annual working hours, which are closely, but far from completely, inversely correlated with average levels of hourly gross domestic product (GDP) (a measure of hourly productivity).

However, the report has also taken a pragmatic approach where it seemed appropriate – for example, in comparing ‘new’ with ‘old’ Member States in certain cases.

With respect to issues of working time flexibility, the report also recognises that some of the traditional country groupings – Nordic versus Mediterranean Member States, for example – do seem to have value. However, the experiences of apparently ‘similar’ countries can sometimes vary significantly, as seen, for example, in major differences in working time arrangements and trends between the two ‘new’ Mediterranean States, Cyprus and Malta, or as shown in the highly varied experiences of the NMS in eastern Europe with respect to working time.

Thus, while a grouping of countries based on economic performance, rather than on cultural or social organisational criteria, obviously skates over the diversity of situations in the different Member States (and was, as mentioned previously, initially chosen for practical reasons), average annual working hours nevertheless are considered a useful general indicator of working time for comparative purposes. Using this indicator, the component elements – weekly hours, holidays, full-time and part-time hours – serve to highlight and explain both the diversity of situations and the evolution of working time patterns across the Member States.

While such a concept – for all workers, or for full-time or part-time workers separately – is not widely used at present, it sits comfortably with the most basic theories of labour market behaviour. For instance, people in low-productivity jobs in low-productivity economies tend to seek to work longer hours than those in high-productivity jobs in high-productivity countries, since it is the most obvious way to achieve higher levels of incomes in the short run.

Likewise, in so far as improvements in levels of income are achieved by raising levels of productivity in some way, then the average number of hours worked is liable to decline over the longer term. This may not necessarily happen in some simple, linear way (and often with compositional changes – such as the growing relative importance of part-time work – that can mislead those who are unwary about where the true trend lies) but nevertheless in ways that make economic sense and are subject to reasonably consistent methods of measurement.

Useful as it may be to approach working time issues in this way, the mixed quantitative and qualitative evidence presented in this report and its annexes clearly indicates that variations in working time experiences and practices between Member States reflect a wide range of factors other than economic factors, such as social, political, cultural and legal aspects. This study does not seek to weigh their relative importance in any formal way, and has tried to avoid resorting to plausible-sounding ad-hoc explanations for all of the cases that fail to conform to ‘expectations’. However, the study includes a considerable amount of national evidence from correspondents which sheds some light on such differences, and may help other researchers develop further comprehensive insights.

In this respect, one issue can be identified where the most significant changes appear to be taking place, but where the differences between countries – notably between those with more or less developed economies and labour markets – are the greatest. This issue relates to the extent to which patterns of working time are arranged or negotiated in ways that can suit the needs of both employees

and employers, as opposed to situations where traditional employer ‘prerogatives’ prevail, for whatever reasons.

In this study, at least on the basis of the reports from national correspondents, and the evidence from survey data, there appears to be some validity to some stereotypical categorisations – for example, where employers and legislators (and also possibly some employee representatives) in southern EU Member States are seemingly much slower to respond to pressures for more flexible working arrangements to match changing work–life balance needs than in northern Member States. However, it should be underlined that the diversity of experiences between Member States with similar levels of economic performance, or in similar geographical locations, continually warns against adopting simplistic explanations too readily, or focusing the blame too quickly in any one direction.

Annex 2 – Duration of work: annual working time

Country	Annual working hours 2006	Developments 2000–2006	Relevance of annual working time in debates and bargaining
Countries with the longest annual working hours			
Greece	2,150	1.4%	In Greece, there is no general debate on annual hours, and working time discussions tend to focus primarily on annual leave. This reflects national traditions in that many collective agreements contain provisions relating leave entitlement to years of service with the same employer.
Poland	2,078 (2007 data)	1.4%	In Poland, the focus of discussion has been on restricting Sunday and holiday working.
Hungary	1,989	-3.5%	In Hungary, the focus is on specific issues, with a tradition of creating longer holidays by swapping work days and weekend rest days close to public holidays.
Czech Republic	1,963	-4.5%	In so far as working time has been debated recently in the Czech Republic, the focus has been on extending the working week in order to reduce overtime hours. No recent changes in holiday entitlement have been introduced, with employees in the private sector entitled to four weeks’ leave, and those in the public sector entitled to five weeks.
Estonia	1,942	0.5%	In Estonia, the focus is also on weeks of leave, with provisions under a 2000–2001 national collective agreement for 25 working days of leave for employees with 10 years of service with the same employer (compared with the average of 23 days of annual paid leave).
Countries with above average annual working hours			
Latvia	1,893	-2.6%	In Latvia, the notion of annual working time is not in common usage, although the number of public holidays has increased in recent years.

Ireland	1,878	-2.8%	In Ireland, collective agreements only cover annual hours in specific cases – for example, in relation to train drivers and prison officers. However, there is a growing interest in the notion in the context of efforts to reduce traditionally high levels of overtime working.
Romania	1,869	0.1%	In Romania, annual leave, holidays, days off, as well as overtime are all said to be open to negotiation in the framework of collective bargaining agreements.
Cyprus	1,863	-3.2%	In Cyprus, there does not appear to be a debate on annual working hours, although there was a significant reduction of 3.2% in annual working hours over the period 2000–2006.
Lithuania	1,855	0.5%	If working time is debated at all in Lithuania, it tends to be in relation to annual leave arrangements. Amendments to the Labour Code in 2007 have increased the number of weekly rest days coinciding with statutory holidays, despite an apparent lack of enthusiasm on the part of the social partners.
Italy	1,814	-2.5%	In Italy, annual hours declined in line with the EU average. However, no further details on these changes are available.
United Kingdom	1,801	-2.4%	In the UK, the annual dimension of working time is reported to attract little attention outside specific processing industries. However, research suggests that some 4% or more of the workforce and of workplaces are nevertheless covered by arrangements centred around annual working hours. In this respect, it is thought that legislation (from 1998 and 2006) covering rights to paid leave may have helped focus attention on annual working hours.
Countries with average annual working hours			
Malta	1,791	7.3%	In Malta, annual working hours rose by 5% between 2000 and 2001, but then increased more steadily until 2006, resulting in a 7.3% increase over the whole period. The number of days of holidays is an issue for the social partners, with trade unions contesting an employer-backed government decision to reduce the number of public holidays each year.
Portugal	1,762	-0.2%	In Portugal, where average hours worked a year have fallen very little since 2000, the focus of debate and negotiation tends to be on daily, weekly or monthly working hours.
Slovakia	1,750	-3.4%	The number of hours worked a year is not a topic of political discussions and social partner negotiations, and Slovak labour legislation only defines weekly working time. The number of public holidays has not change significantly but, according to collective agreements, the number of companies providing holidays above the statutory level has increased.

Slovenia	1,727	-2.7%	In Slovenia, where annual working hours fell by 2.7% between 2000 and 2006, the annual dimension of working time receives hardly any attention in political or everyday discussion, or in social partner negotiations.
Finland	1,714	-2.0%	In Finland, where annual working hours declined in line with the EU average, the annual dimension of working time is not currently a focal point of discussion. However, the main employer organisation – the Confederation of Finnish Industries (Elinkeinoelämän keskusliitto, EK) – is pushing for more attention to be paid to annual working hours, citing concerns about the length of annual holidays.
Austria	1,792	-1.7%	In Austria, where annual working hours fell by 1.7% over the 2000–2006 period, public holidays are an issue of contention between the social partners. Employers are seeking to reduce the number of public holidays, while trade unions argue that average annual working hours are long by EU standards. In this context, some recent collective agreements have included specific provisions to reduce the number of weeks worked a year
Bulgaria	1,654	0.8%	In Bulgaria, where annual working hours appear to have increased somewhat, the notion of annual working hours is not a subject of public debate. It is reported that the government usually takes decisions about annual holidays, public holidays and rest days.
Spain	1,653	-4.5%	In Spain, annual hours worked have fallen significantly (4.5%) since 2000, with most of the decline occurring since 2002.
Countries with below average annual working hours			
Luxembourg	1,605	-3.4%	In Luxembourg, where annual working hours fell by 3.4% over the period 2000–2006, the dimension of working time attracts little attention. However, the topic has been introduced into discussions on flexible working arrangements in the financial services sector.
Sweden	1,599	-2.6%	In Sweden, a debate on annual working hours took place in 2002 when the government proposed to reduce annual working time through a mixture of longer holidays, fewer working hours a week and special individual working time arrangements. Since then, however, there has been a change of government, and attention has shifted to addressing potential labour shortages. Despite these changes of political focus, annual hours declined over the period 2000–2006 by 2.6%.
Belgium	1,567	0.9%	When flexible working arrangements are negotiated in Belgium, where average annual working hours actually increased by some 0.9% over the period 2000–2006, the length of the reference period for negotiating working time has become an issue. However, negotiations tend to refer to a three-month or six-month reference period, rather than a year. On the other hand, discussions in the

			automotive sector could extend this reference period beyond one year, to three or four years, in order to take account of varying levels of work effort and intensity over the life cycle of new products.
Denmark	1,562	0.5%	In Denmark, where average working time a year appears to have remained virtually constant over the 2000–2006 period, public debate has continued on annual hours. Employers focus on the relatively short hours of work and long periods of paid annual leave, however, while trade unions argue that Danish people spend a lot of time at work because of the country's high employment rates of both women and men.
France	1,541	-3.2%	In France, where annual working hours declined by some 3.2% over the period 2000–2006, this issue has received increased attention in light of the legislation introducing a 35-hour working week. Efforts to reduce overall working time have included extra days off, additional holidays and variable work schedules over the year.
Countries with the shortest annual working hours			
Germany	1,432	-2.8%	In Germany, annual hours worked have declined by 2.8% over the period 2000–2006, and the number of public holidays has not changed significantly.
Norway	1,414	-2.8%	In Norway, where annual working time declined by 2.8% over the period 2000–2006, discussions tend to focus on annual leave arrangements (given that some 90% of the workforce are entitled to five weeks' holidays following a wage settlement in 2001 affecting the Act relating to holidays) or on other specific issues, such as reducing hours worked by shift workers.
Netherlands	1,393	-2.9%	In the Netherlands, where annual hours declined by 2.9% over the period 2000–2006, discussions on working time are reported to have been concentrated on the length of the average working week. The number of weeks worked a year seems to have remained relatively unchanged since the average number of weeks of holidays has not changed.

Source: *European national accounts*

Annex 3 – Average weekly hours worked

Country	Weekly hours 2006	Developments 2000–2006	Developments/trends/long hours/comments
Countries with the longest annual working hours			
Greece	42.7	-1.2%	In Greece, where average annual hours worked increased over the period 2000–2006, average weekly working time fell by 1.2%, but still remained close to 43 hours in 2006. The decline in average weekly working time is attributed to a reduction in the number of people working very long hours and by increased part-time working.
Poland	40.9	0.0%	There is little evidence to date of any impact of EU legislation on weekly hours worked in countries with the longest annual working hours. In Poland, scepticism is reported concerning the benefits of the main provisions of Directive 2000/34/EC.
Hungary	40.3	-2.2%	In Hungary, the social partners have failed to agree on any reduction in the statutory working week.
Czech Republic	41.8	-4.1%	In the Czech Republic, average usual working hours fell by 4.1% to 41.8 hours over the period 2002–2006. Almost all of this decline is explained by a reduction of working time of two hours a week between 2000 and 2001. While there has been a gradual reduction in the hours worked by part-time workers over time, the proportion of people working very long hours appears to have remained high and constant, with 8% working more than 50 hours a week in 2006.
Estonia	39.7	-1.7%	Average weekly hours worked in Estonia fell by 1.7% over the period 2002–2006, despite annual working hours increasing, bringing average weekly working time below 40 hours. This is attributed to a reduction in the proportion of people working over 50 hours a week from 14% in 1999 to 5% in 2005, according to a local poll by the marketing research company Saar Poll (the proportion of those working more than 48 hours a week amounted to 6.7%, according to the 2005 EWCS). However, average weekly working time was estimated at 44 hours in a Public Opinion Research Centre report in 2005 – 46 hours for men and 41 hours for women.
Countries with above average annual working hours			
Latvia	41.4	-1.7%	In Latvia, average weekly working time stabilised at 41.4 hours in 2006 – a reduction of 1.7% compared with 2000. Indications from national sources suggest that very long hours of work have been reduced, but progress is attributed to improvements in the economic situation and rising wage levels in Latvia rather than EU legislation.
Ireland	36.6	-3.7%	In Ireland, LFS data indicate a decline in average weekly

			hours worked of 3.7% between 2000 and 2006 to 36.6 hours. This reduction has been associated, however, with increased flexibility in working arrangements. While the adoption of the Directive 2000/34/EC may have encouraged debate on working time issues, almost 12% of those employed were still working 45 or more hours a week in 2007.
Romania	40.6	-0.2%	In Romania, LFS data on average weekly working hours suggest little change over the period 2000–2006. However, a national Household Labour Force Survey (<i>Ancheta Integrată asupra Forței de Muncă în Gospodării</i> , AMIGO) suggests an increase from 40.5 to 41.6 hours. Moreover, the proportion of those employed working over 46 hours a week is reported to have remained constant at around 18%, with self-employed people, as in other countries, working the longest hours.
Cyprus	40.2	-1.5%	In Cyprus, where working time in most sectors is regulated by law or collective agreements (for example, for the public sector and in relation to retail opening hours), LFS data indicate a reduction of 1.5% in average weekly hours worked to just over 40 hours from 2000 to 2006. Progress in reducing working time is seen to have been significantly influenced by a 1993 framework agreement between the social partners.
Lithuania	38.6	-0.5%	Average weekly hours worked in Lithuania decreased slightly over the period 2000–2006. However, doubts have been expressed about the reliability of this measure, given that overtime is considered to be poorly measured. This is evidenced by increased claims to the State Labour Inspectorate (Valstybinė darbo inspekcija, VDI) regarding unpaid overtime, with companies seeking to overcome labour shortages by introducing longer working hours.
Italy	38.5	-1.5%	In Italy, LFS data suggest that average weekly working hours worked fell by 1.5% over the period 2000–2006 to 38.5 hours. The 2006 Quality of Work Survey (QWS) carried out by Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers (Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori, ISFOL) suggested that average working hours per week declined from 39 hours in 2002 to 38 hours in 2006, with some reduction in the proportion of people working long hours (over 45 hours a week) – down from 19.5% to 18% of the working population. Almost five times as many self-employed persons as employees work more than 45 hours a week, with men much more likely to work long hours than women.
UK	36.9	-1.9%	In the UK, average weekly hours worked fell in the 1970s, stabilised in the 1980s, and then began to fall again in the late 1990s. Over the period 2000–2006, average weekly hours worked fell further from 37.6 hours to 36.9 hours, with the proportion of men in

			employment working over 45 hours falling from 39% in 2001 to 30% in 2007. The discussion on EU legislation – for which there is a UK ‘opt-out’ – is considered to have had some impact in encouraging a reduction in very long working hours, although less than the general desire for a better work–life balance as living standards have risen. A large reduction in overtime working is currently reported, although there are doubts about the accuracy of its measurement.
Countries with average annual working hours			
Malta	39.1	-3.7%	In Malta, average weekly hours worked fell from 40.6 to 39.1 hours between 2000 and 2006. This reduction is mainly attributed to an increase in part-time working, notably by women. However, the 2005 EWCS indicated that nearly 14% of those in employment still worked more than 48 hours a week.
Portugal	39.1	-1.5%	In Portugal, average usual hours declined between 2000 and 2006 from 39.7 to 39.1 hours. This is attributed to an increase in part-time working in the early part of the six-year period, which has now levelled off.
Slovakia	41	-3.8%	In Slovakia, average hours fell significantly over the 2000–2006 period from 42.6 to 41 hours. This is attributed to part-time workers working fewer hours rather than any reduction in the proportion of persons working very long hours, with 20% of workers apparently working more than 48 hours a week, with no discernable influence from of Directive 2000/34/EC.
Slovenia	40.3	-3.1%	For Slovenia, the LFS data for the period 2000–2006 indicate a fall in average hours worked from 41.6 to 40.3 hours. This reduction can mainly be explained by increased part-time work, which nevertheless remains relatively limited (less than 9% of women and under 5% of men in 2006). Regarding very long hours of work, the national EWCS data for 2005 indicated that, contrary to findings in most other countries, twice as many employees as self-employed persons worked more than 48 hours a week. Directive 2000/34/EC is not considered to have had any effect.
Finland	37.6	-2.3%	In Finland, average weekly working hours fell from 38.5 to 37.6 hours between 2000 and 2006. This is partly explained by increased part-time working, but also by reduced hours of work by those working part time, especially men.
Austria	39.2	2.1%	In Austria, average weekly hours worked declined somewhat in the first part of the period 2000–2006, but then rose again to just over 39 hours, amounting to a 2.1% increase overall. An increase in part-time working (from 14.7% to 22.1%) was more than offset by a substantial increase in the hours worked by full-time workers – up from 40.1 in 1997 to 42.7 in 2007. In the view of the Austrian social partners, the EU Directive has

			had little impact nationally.
Bulgaria	41.4	1.7%	Between 2000 and 2006, average working hours in Bulgaria actually rose by 1.7% – from 40.7 to 41.4 hours. Part-time working is limited and its impact on average weekly working time is considered insignificant. To date, there is no evidence to suggest that the adoption of the EU Directive has had any impact on working hours, with 21% of the workforce working more than 48 hours a week (although more than half of these workers are self-employed).
Spain	39.4	-2.0%	In Spain, average weekly hours worked fell between 2000 and 2006 from 40.2 to 39.4 hours, with part-time working increasing from 8% to 12% over the same period. As in other countries, women are overrepresented among part-time workers, although it is noted that women in public sector jobs work longer hours than women in the private sector. It is notable that 26% of Spanish employees are reported as working six days a week, compared with an EU average of 16% of workers, probably or possibly due to the services activities related to tourism.
Countries with below average annual working hours			
Luxembourg	37.3	-2.9%	Between 2000 and 2006, Luxembourg saw a significant reduction in average weekly hours worked, from 38.4 to 37.3 hours, associated with an increase in the number of part-time workers. EU legislation is considered unlikely to have had any impact on working hours since national legislation was already in place, although the number of persons working very long hours appears to have fallen.
Sweden	36.4	-0.5%	In Sweden, average weekly hours worked changed little over the past 10 years, with a modest decline between 2000 and 2006. The number of average hours worked currently stands at 36.4 hours a week. The gap between men and women in terms of working hours has always been relatively small, but has decreased further, albeit marginally, with men currently working 38 hours in their main job and women working 32 hours. Hours worked in full-time jobs are virtually identical for men and women at just under 40 hours a week. However, hours worked by men and women in part-time jobs have both risen, increasing from 19 to 21.5 hours for men and from 23.5 to 26.5 hours for women. Across the workforce as a whole, only 9% of persons work very long hours, most of whom are self-employed.
Belgium	36.8	-0.8%	In Belgium, a major change in working time took place in the 1980s. Nevertheless, there have been few changes since then, and changes in average hours worked have been limited, with a modest reduction over the 2000–2006 period to 36.8 hours a week. Part-time working has increased, but its effect has been offset by a slight increase in hours worked by both part-time and full-time workers. EU legislation is not seen to have had any effect

			on working time arrangements, given the high level of Belgian regulation already in place.
Denmark	35.3	-2.2%	In Denmark, a decrease in weekly working hours from 36.1 to 35.3 hours was observed between 2000 and 2006. This appears to have occurred across-the-board, although there have been changes with respect to the number of part-time hours workers, with those of men increasing and those of women declining. Only 10% of workers are recorded as working long hours; this figure did not change over the six-year period in question.
France	38.1	2.4%	In France, a substantial reduction in average weekly working hours is reported to have taken place since the first ‘Aubry’ law on working time reduction was passed during 1998, with the most notable reductions in larger companies. LFS data indicate, however, that average hours worked actually increased significantly – from 37.2 to 38.1 hours – between 2000 and 2006. The fact that average weekly hours worked remain above the legal 35-hour limit is attributed to systematic overtime working (notably in small companies and in sectors such as hotels and restaurants and transport) and the consequences of some collective agreements, in which acceptance of ‘inactive’ periods can increase the effective time spent at work. The change of government in 2007 is seen to signal an end to incentives to reduce working time.
Countries with the shortest annual working hours			
Germany	35.7	-3.8%	In Germany, average weekly hours worked fell steadily and significantly between 2000 and 2006 from 37.1 to 35.7 hours. According to a study by the Institute for Employment Research (Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, IAB), this was mainly the consequence of an increase in part-time working (accounting for almost 26% of those employed in 2006 compared with just over 19% in 2000), caused in part by changes in social security legislation that exempted those with short weekly working hours.
Norway	33.9	-4.2%	In Norway, average weekly working hours declined between 2000 and 2006 from 35.4 to 33.9 hours. There is no evidence to suggest that this decline was due to more women entering the labour market and working part time, given that the proportion of women working full time remained stable at around 55%–56% over the 2000–2006 period, with a slight decrease in the number of men working full time – from over 89% to less than 87%. Only 6% of workers currently work more than 48 hours a week – a proportion that has fallen significantly since 2000. Since the maximum 48-hour working week was established in Norway in 1919, the only conceivable effect of EU legislation would have been in raising awareness of the issue.
Netherlands	31.2	-1.9%	In the Netherlands, a fall in average weekly hours worked between 2000 and 2006 – from 31.8 to 31.2

			<p>hours – was reported by the LFS. However, the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, CBS) suggests a larger decline in average hours: from 31.4 to 30.1 hours (with overtime) and from 30.9 to 29.7 hours (without overtime), between 2000 and 2006–2007. Changes are attributed to the entry of women in the labour market and the growth of part-time working among both men and women. EU legislation is not seen to have had an effect on working hours in the Netherlands since there was already legislation in place in this field, limiting average weekly working time to a maximum of 45 hours (40 hours for night work). Nevertheless, the government extended this limit in 2007 to an average maximum of 52 hours over a 16-week period.</p>
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Source: LFS

Annex 4 – Part-time working

Country	% incidence of part-time work (+/- x%)				Government initiatives to support part-time work
	Men 2006	% point change 2000–2006	Women 2006	% point change 2000–2006	
Countries with the longest annual working hours					
Greece	2.9%	0.3%	10.2%	2.4%	In Greece, the rate of part-time work has increased somewhat from 2000 to 2006 and now stands at 2.9% for men and 10.2% for women. Legislation introduced in 1998 allows for part-time working in public services, but this possibility appears to have been seldom used in practice.
Poland	7.1%	-1.1%	13%	-0.4%	In Poland, 7.1% of men and 13% of women work part time, but these proportions appear to have declined over the review period 2000–2006.
Hungary	2.6%	0.6%	5.6%	0.4%	In Hungary, the rate of part-time working is low – 2.6% for men and 5.6% for women. This is despite legislation dating back to 1991 which allows subsidies to be given for part-time employment, as well as other incentives. For example, since 2004, employers who offer employment to parents on childcare leave (who are not allowed to work full time) are exempt from healthcare payments. Likewise, since 2005, health insurance

					contributions have been adjusted to make them proportional to hours worked.
Czech Republic	2.2%	0.0%	8.7%	-0.6%	In the Czech Republic, part-time working is undertaken by just 2.2% of men and 8.7% of women, with little change over the period 2000–2006. Moreover, both the demand for, and supply of, part-time work is low, with women reportedly preferring flexible working arrangements rather than fewer work hours. No general measures of government support for part-time work are available. In fact, part-time work is seen to be more appropriate for those facing difficulties in entering or re-entering the labour market (such as those returning from parental leave, those aged over 50 years old, or those with disabilities), with support provided through lower social insurance contributions and tax concessions.
Estonia	4.3%	-1.0%	11.3%	0.4%	In Estonia, 4.3% of men and 11.3% of women work part time. While public policy statements are generally positive regarding part-time work, no active steps appear to have been taken to encourage it, even as the policy debate turns towards issues of flexibility and work–life balance. Overall, low income levels are seen as the main factor discouraging the growth of part-time work.
Countries with above average annual working hours					
Latvia	4.7%	-5.0%	8.3%	-4.5%	In Latvia, there has been a shift towards full-time working, with a substantial decline in the proportion of people working only part time, to 4.7% of men and 8.3% of women. Legal regulations have been introduced concerning part-time employment, but no specific support measures appear to have been implemented.
Ireland	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	In Ireland, part-time working had stabilised at about 18% of the workforce, comprising some 6% of men in employment and well over 30% of women in 2004, the latest year for which data are available. No particular government policy initiatives have been taken to encourage part-time working.
Romania	9.5%	-5.1%	9.8%	-8.8%	In Romania, part-time work is reportedly undertaken by 9.5% of men and 9.8% of women – both representing a decline over the reference period 2000–2006. No

					obvious action is being taken to encourage part-time working, which is not seen as attractive by potential employees. Nevertheless, part-time working is now reported as being better regulated under the new Labour Code.
Cyprus	4.3%	-0.2%	12.1%	-1.8%	In Cyprus, part-time working is undertaken by some 4.3% of men and 12.1% of women, and appears to have declined somewhat from 2000 to 2006. The government is supporting part-time working in the context of schemes to promote modern and flexible forms of employment, but these are largely targeted towards women who are currently outside the workforce.
Lithuania	7.9%	-1.3%	12%	0.9%	In Lithuania, rates of part-time working have declined somewhat for men to 7.9% and increased for women to 12%. Two factors appear to discourage part-time working: the low levels of pay for part-time work, and the fact that employers find it difficult to organise such work, especially if they have to take account of employees' working time preferences.
Italy	4.7%	1.0%	26.5%	10.0%	In Italy, part-time work has increased from a very low level over the past 10 years, currently accounting for 4.7% of men (7% according to a national survey in 2006 on 'Changing work' by the Institute for Economic and Social Research (Istituto di Ricerche Economiche e Sociali, IRES)) and 26.5% of women. Credit is given to the Directive 2000/34/EC for enabling part-time working to develop, but the Italian national social security arrangements, especially as regards pensions, are still seen as discriminating against, and hence discouraging, part-time employment.
UK	10.6%	1.7%	42.5%	-1.9%	In the UK, part-time work is carried out by some 10.6% of men, but 42.5% of women. According to a Workplace Employee Relations Survey (WERS) management survey in 2004, the proportion of workplaces with no part-time workers fell from 21% in 1998 to 17% in 2004, probably due to increased part-time work in the public sector. The tax system is seen to provide a modest incentive to part-time work because of a minimum tax threshold.

Countries with average annual working hours					
Malta	4.9%	1.9%	21.5%	6.0%	In Malta, part-time working has grown to become a significant labour market feature, with 21.5% of women in employment working part time, compared with only 4.9% of men. The government has encouraged the growth of part-time employment, including through the revision of income tax bands. A new public employment register has also been established for people seeking part-time work.
Portugal	7.4%	1.0%	15.8%	-0.6%	In Portugal, part-time working remains relatively low and stable at around 7.4% for men and 15.8% for women. No particular incentives are in place to encourage part-time working. However, in line with the European Employment Strategy, part-time working is seen as a measure to 'promote equality between men and women and facilitate work-life balance'. Low pay is considered the main reason limiting employee interest in taking up part-time work.
Slovakia	1.3%	0.2%	4.7%	1.6%	In Slovakia, the incidence of part-time working is significantly low, involving only 1.3% of men in employment and 4.7% of women, with only a modest increase over the reference period 2000–2006. In practice, part-time jobs are generally taken up by workers only when full-time work is not available, for health reasons, or to suit the needs of employers. Changes to the Labour Code in 2007 have brought about better protection for part-time workers, with some tax incentives for those who are the lowest paid, which may serve to encourage more people to seek part-time work.
Slovenia	7.2%	1.9%	11.6%	3.8%	In Slovenia, the gender balance of part-time working is relatively close, with 7.2% of men and 11.6% of women working part time, with increases in both cases over the 2000–2006 period. However, part-time working appears to be more related to age than gender, being typically carried out by those aged under 25 years or over 55 years of age. For younger workers (where about 63% of 15–19-year-olds in employment and 24% of 20–24-year-olds work part time), the

					high level of part-time work is related to the practice of combining regular studies with paid employment. For older workers, taking on part-time work is more a way of coping with health problems or partial disability, which is how part-time work tends to be perceived. The Slovenian government does not encourage part-time working and social security rules can act as a disincentive. However, a specific scheme – similar in concept to that in Finland – provides some financial support and a right to part-time work in the context of the 2006 Act on parental protection and family benefits. No data are currently available on the take-up rate of part-time work, although it is understood that it is almost exclusively women who avail of this form of employment.
Finland	9.3%	1.3%	19.2%	2.2%	The rate of part-time working is reasonably high in Finland, with a slight upward trend since 2000. The gender imbalance – with 9.3% of men working part time compared with 19.2% of women – is partly explained by the Finnish Quality of Work Life Survey (FWLS) of 2003, which found significant differences in motivation between men and women. Men were working part time because they were partly retired (33%), studying (30%) or not able to obtain full-time work (20%), while more women would have preferred to work full time (37%), with fewer working part time for reasons of study (20%) or part-time retirement (17%). Two specific legislative measures encourage part-time working. The first measure is a part-retirement scheme for full-time workers aged 58 years or more, with a part-pension of 50% of the difference between regular and part-time earnings. The second measure is a (less well used) part-time childcare leave system for those who reduce their working hours when their children are of pre-school age, or in their first two years of attendance at school.
Austria	6.5%	2.4%	40.2%	8.0%	In Austria, as in the UK, a strong gender bias is evident, with only 6.5% of men working part time, compared with 40.2% of women. Successive governments appear to have been satisfied with such

					arrangements, but the 2007 amendment to the Working Time Act (<i>Arbeitszeitgesetz, AZG</i>) has adopted a long-standing demand of trade unions and given part-time workers a right to premium rates of pay for overtime work, thus making part-time work less attractive to employers.
Bulgaria	1.5%	-1.4%	2.5%	-1.1%	In Bulgaria, the rate of part-time working is extremely low, covering only 1.5% of men and 2.5% of women in employment in 2006. Moreover, part-time working has declined rather than risen over the past five years. Given current low levels of hourly pay, part-time work is not attractive for most employees and is generally viewed as only suitable for students, or as a secondary source of income.
Spain	4.3%	1.5%	23.2%	6.4%	In Spain, some 4.3% of employed men are in part-time work, compared with 23.2% of women. Part-time working has increased – especially for women – reflecting pressures from both employers (seeking flexibility) and employees (seeking to better combine professional activities and personal needs).
Countries with below average annual working hours					
Luxembourg	2.6%	0.9%	36.2%	11.1%	In Luxembourg, part-time working has increased substantially in recent years, largely due to many more women working part-time hours. At present, 36.2% of women work part time, compared with only 2.6% of men. While there is no specific policy to encourage part-time working, measures are in place that provide financial compensation for employers who, instead of making employees redundant ‘for economic reasons’, agree to keep them on in part-time jobs.
Sweden	11.8%	3.6%	40.2%	7.9%	In Sweden, the rate of part-time working is high and has continued to increase, but revealing a significant gender imbalance, with 40.2% of women working part time compared with 11.8% of men. There is an ongoing debate on the effects of part-time working on inequality between men and women. While the previous government had wanted to establish a right to full-time work, with some exceptions, the current government does

					not support this idea and has opted, instead, for tax changes designed to remove disincentives to working full time.
Belgium	7.4%	1.9%	41.1%	3.7%	In Belgium, 41.1% of women, but only 7.4% of men work part time. Part-time working is particularly encouraged through career breaks. These were introduced in 1985, partly in order to provide job opportunities for unemployed people, but are now considered more as a way of improving work–life balance. A generalised ‘time credit’ system is widely used to enable women aged under 50 years to take career breaks, with men over 50 years of age also making use of this option to reduce working hours.
Denmark	13.3%	3.1%	35.4%	1.3%	At a rate of 13.3%, part-time working among men is high in Denmark, although still well below the 35.4% rate for women. Legislation introduced in 2002 made it easier to establish company-level agreements on part-time work, regardless of any collective agreement provisions, but with protection for employees not wishing to work part time. A law on flexible jobs (targeting those with a reduced ability to work) also encourages part-time working, with publicly-financed compensation available to companies. Part-time workers in Denmark can receive unemployment benefits, but the government is seeking to tighten the rules to encourage more people to seek full-time work.
France	5.8%	0.5%	30.2%	-0.6%	In France, part-time working increased markedly from 1992 to 1998 (following reductions in social security charges for part-time workers), but it has stabilised since then, covering 5.8% of men and 30.2% of women. Reductions in working time have tended to be the result of new full-time employment contracts stipulating shorter working hours, rather than the introduction of more part-time work contracts.
Countries with the shortest annual working hours					
Germany	9.3%	4.3%	45.6%	7.7%	In Germany, part-time work has increased considerably over the reference period, and some 9.3% of men and 45.6% of women currently in

					<p>employment are working part time. Average hours worked by men in such jobs increased from 15.7 to 16.8 hours a week between 2000 and 2006, while those of women remained broadly unchanged at 18.4 hours a week in 2006. Significant regional differences exist in respect of part-time working: an IAB study indicated that the proportion of women working part time is much lower in the eastern part of the country (38% in 2004) than in the western part (51% in 2004). However, the percentage of men working part time in 2004 was higher in eastern than in western Germany.</p> <p>The Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt, Destatis) also reports that, while the proportion of employees working part time because they could not find a full-time job was only 11% in the western part of the country in 2005, the equivalent figure for eastern Germany was 54%. The position of part-time workers is covered by the 2001 Law on part-time and fixed-term work (<i>Teilzeit- und Befristungsgesetz</i>, TzBfG), which provides workers with the right to opt to work shorter hours after the person concerned has been in full-time employment for six months (in companies with more than 15 employees).</p>
Norway	13.9%	3.3%	45.2%	2.2%	<p>In Norway, the proportion of women working part time in 2006 was much higher than for men – 45.2% compared with 13.9% respectively – with some increase in the proportions of both men and women working part time since 2000. No strong government policy exists on part-time work, except in respect of involuntary part-time work, where the main aim is to help the workers concerned (notably women) into full-time employment.</p>
Netherlands	23%	3.7%	74.7%	3.7%	<p>In the Netherlands, part-time working has increased over the years, including during the reference period 2000–2006, with by far the highest proportions of employees working part time in the EU – 74.7% of women and 23% of men. Until 2002, the government promoted part-time work, particularly for women, by supporting childcare initiatives. It also</p>

					encouraged part-time work for students as a way of financing their studies. Since 2003, however, the government has begun to discourage part-time work because of concerns about labour shortages.
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Note: n.a. = No data available.

Source: LFS

Annex 5 – Trade union views

Countries with the highest annual working hours	
Greece	In Greece, the General Confederation of Labour (Γενική Συνομοσπονδία Εργατών Ελλάδας, GSEE) has consistently promoted the case for the introduction of a 35-hour working week without loss of pay. In terms of the wider use of part-time work, trade unions are cautious, seeing it as more suitable for specific groups (such as students). In general, they fear that it could lead to more low-standard jobs, lower pay and reduced social protection, creating a ‘grey area’ between regular employment and unemployment.
Poland	In Poland, trade unions are said to have essentially focused on the issue of overtime pay in relation to working time.
Hungary	In Hungary, weekly hours of work are rarely specifically addressed as an issue at either sectoral or company level, with the main debate being over meal breaks and how they should be taken into account in calculating working time. In general, working time issues such as overtime hours, non-standard work, shift working, posting of workers, working on rest days and holidays are addressed in the context of overall pay negotiations.
Czech Republic	In the Czech Republic, trade unions aim to regulate the various aspects of working time – scheduling, overtime, working on standby – at both enterprise and sectoral level. Significantly, it is reported that the vast majority of company-level collective agreements in 2007 provided for a reduction in working time, with provision for an increased holiday allowance. With regard to part-time jobs, trade unions tend to want to limit the numbers of such jobs, although they support employer initiatives to provide support facilities (notably childcare) for part-time employees. In this respect, there appears to be a tendency for collective agreements to take more account of the desire to achieve a better work–life balance.
Estonia	In Estonia, working time is seen as the second most important issue concerning collective bargaining after pay, with the trade unions seeking to set precise conditions for recording working time, overtime hours and work carried out at unusual hours. Collective negotiations generally focus on full-time employment, and no specific initiatives have been taken regarding part-time work.
Countries with above average annual working hours	
Latvia	In Latvia, working time issues are negotiated at company level, with a

	particular focus on holidays and overtime payments. In contrast to some of the other NMS, part-time jobs are viewed positively by trade unions as a source of additional employment and income for workers.
Ireland	In Ireland, a reduction in the working week continues to be a priority for trade unions, and collective bargaining has traditionally played a significant role in the regulation of working time. In the 1990s, based on a 1989–1990 framework agreement, a 39-hour working week was established for manual workers (35–37.5 hours for non-manual workers). There have been no further general reductions since then, although individual trade unions continue to negotiate reductions in the working week, with a landmark 35-hour week deal agreed in 2003 in the financial services sector. Trade unions in Ireland are regarded as having rather mixed views regarding part-time work – they fear that demands for more flexible work could undermine their bargaining position, while recognising the need to represent more ‘atypical’ (including part-time) workers.
Romania	In negotiations in Romania, trade unions pay particular attention to the appropriate definition of daily and weekly working time, as well as to ensuring the correct payments for overtime, night work and work carried out during spare time or public holidays. In this context, part-time work is seen as an exception to normal full-time employment.
Cyprus	In Cyprus, working time arrangements are closely regulated through collective agreements. With respect to part-time work, the main concern is to ensure that arrangements are in line with employee wishes rather than being imposed by employers. Accordingly, trade unions continue to ask for part-time workers to be put on an equal footing with full-time workers.
Lithuania	In Lithuania, the strength of the national labour market has had the effect of increasing working hours, which trade unions see as resulting in a deterioration of working conditions. In practice, neither employees nor employers are particularly attracted by part-time work – employees believe that part-time working implies lower incomes, and employers resent the additional organisational work involved in hiring part-time workers.
Italy	A particular objective of trade unions in Italy has been to limit the freedom of employers to use overtime at will, and to encourage the creation of additional jobs. However, this has created a dilemma given that working longer hours is one of the few options available for workers to increase earnings when rates of output and productivity growth are low, as in recent years. Trade union attitudes towards part-time work remain somewhat mixed, as they view this form of work as a practical means of improving work–life balance, while also being concerned about the obvious gender imbalance among part-time workers in practice. More generally, their aim is to discourage casual or fragmented part-time working patterns and to negotiate agreements in certain sectors, such as hotels and restaurants, that can formalise previously undeclared work.
UK	In the UK, a particular focus of trade union concerns has been excessively long working hours, given the country’s continuing ‘opt-out’ from the EU legislation pertaining to the 48-hour working week. This is seen as a health and safety issue as well as an obstacle to the achievement of a better work–life balance. In the absence of legislation,

	<p>limitations on working hours in the UK appear to depend on the presence, or absence, of trade union representation at the workplace. In this respect, trade unions have taken a much more positive view of part-time work, and of organising part-time workers, since new regulations in 2000 provided equal rights concerning pay, pensions and employment protection.</p>
<p>Countries with average annual working hours</p>	
Malta	<p>In Malta, the main trade union concerns are rather specific and somewhat unexpected – namely to resist the introduction of the Directive 2000/34/EC setting the 48-hour limit on the working week. At the same time, they denounce the government’s proposed amendment to legislation on national and public holidays (which would mean the loss of public holidays falling on a weekend), and are seeking to retain the rights of government employees to work half days between mid June and the end of September.</p>
Portugal	<p>No information provided.</p>
Slovakia	<p>In Slovakia, the most notable collective bargaining developments in this area concern an agreement to reduce the working hours of public sector employees. Trade unions have taken a positive approach to part-time working, but are concerned about ensuring job security for the workers involved.</p>
Slovenia	<p>In Slovenia, over the past five years, the trade union focus in collective negotiations has been on flexibility, including addressing employer and government proposals that would have extended daily working time by removing the lunch break. This move was resisted, however, and formalised in the conditions set out in the Employment Relations Act that was agreed and passed in the autumn of 2007. Sunday and holiday working by employees in retail distribution have also been issues of contention in Slovenia, which resulted in a national referendum on the opening hours of shops, during which a majority of participants voted for Sunday closure. Employers challenged this, however, and a new Collective Agreement for Trade was signed in the autumn of 2006 allowing employers to decide on their opening hours (including on Sundays and holidays), but with substantial financial benefits for employees working on those days.</p>
Finland	<p>In Finland, the emphasis in negotiations from a trade union perspective is on two specific issues: an attempt to establish a four-hour minimum work ‘shift’ for part-time working (so as to avoid working time being split, for example, between two hours in the morning and two hours in the afternoon); and progress towards ensuring that arrangements concerning flexible working hour ‘banking’ (in which flexible hours are accumulated over a given reference period) are acceptable to employees as they are to employers.</p>
Austria	<p>In Austria, trade unions have traditionally been sceptical about efforts to make working time arrangements more flexible and have sought to trade off flexibility for working time reductions. However, with the scope for further reductions in working time seen as limited, the emphasis has shifted towards the achievement of a better work–life balance, with trade unions favouring collective negotiations at sectoral level. Negotiations on working time often focus on practical issues – the definition of a normal working week, flexitime arrangements, the reference periods for</p>

	overtime working or shift working regulations. In Austria, as in some other countries, there is a degree of trade union ambivalence to part-time work, with the high incidence of part-time work among women being viewed as a major factor associated with the gender pay gap (particularly as women are overrepresented in typically low-wage sectors). Trade unions have also argued for measures to stop or discourage employers from splitting full-time jobs into part-time roles.
Bulgaria	In Bulgaria, working time arrangements are negotiated between the social partners and government within the framework of the national Labour Code established in 2001–2004. Collective negotiations and agreements cover issues of working time, leave, holidays and rest days, as well as part-time working and working time flexibility. Trade unions have sought a gradual reduction in the working week from 40 to 35 hours, but without much support from either employers or government.
Spain	In Spain, a traditional goal of trade unions has been to achieve shorter working hours in order to attain a better work–life balance. This approach has the support of public authorities and employers, which are reported to be increasingly aware of the benefits – in terms of enhancing the corporate image, as well as improving staff motivation and productivity – of actions that result in more flexible working arrangements without necessarily involving reduced working hours. This is confirmed in a report by the National Commission for the Rationalisation of Spanish Working Time (<i>Comisión Nacional para la Racionalización de los Horarios Españoles y su Normalización con los de los países de la UE</i>).
Countries with below average annual working hours	
Luxembourg	In general, trade unions in Luxembourg continue to support a reduction in working time with no loss of income and a sixth week of holidays a year, with a focus on achieving a better work–life balance. In this context, trade unions are calling for a right to part-time work. However, studies suggest that part-time work is not always wanted, as well as being mainly carried out by women.
Sweden	While the Swedish Trade Union Confederation (Landsorganisationen i Sverige, LO) has the long-standing goal of reducing working time to six hours a day, the focus in recent years has shifted away from reductions in working time to increases in pay. As part of this process, trade unions are also pushing for workers to have a right to a full-time employment contract, since part-time work is viewed somewhat negatively and is seen as an obstacle to achieving equality between men and women in the home and at work.
Belgium	In Belgium, campaigns to reduce working time (notably in order to reduce unemployment through work-sharing arrangements) are now a thing of the past following the introduction of the 38-hour working week as a general rule in 2001. However, working time is still one of the top trade union issues at company level, partly because national regulations allow considerable scope for sectoral or workplace-level negotiations. As a result of a new intersectoral agreement for 2007–2008, a current concern relates to overtime working, with pressure from employers to reduce overtime costs (with support from the government). Trade unions in Belgium are generally positive about part-time work, provided it is voluntary and that it does not lead to job insecurity or working at unsocial hours. At the same time, they are seeking to extend the use of

	working time account ('time banking' or 'time credit') systems more generally.
Denmark	In Denmark, the 37-hour working week has been the nominal norm since its introduction in 1990 and, since then, the issue of working time has not been high on the social partner agenda. However, the national employer organisation has reopened the debate in 2009 by proposing the option of combining longer working hours with higher pay. Trade unions have responded with uncertainty, however, citing possible problems such as increased stress or sickness. Traditionally, most trade unions in Denmark have opposed the idea of part-time working, even though it is allowed under most collective agreements. This negative attitude has been re-enforced by recent legislation on part-time employment which trade unions see as providing employers with the possibility to force workers to accept such jobs, and to dismiss them if they do not.
France	In France, working time issues have been at the centre of collective bargaining in recent years, given the legal requirement to implement working time reductions through collective agreements. Following the changes introduced by the new government in 2002, however, companies have been able to opt out from the legal working time restrictions by agreement with their workforces, although few appear to have done so. The threat of the new government in 2007 to remove any reference to legal working time provoked a strongly negative response from trade unions.
Countries with the shortest annual working hours	
Germany	In Germany, the Confederation of German Trade Unions (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, DGB) advocates a 35-hour working week for all employees, reflecting the view that longer working hours have a negative effect on work–life balance and health, as well as leading to lower rates of hourly pay. This position has been broadly maintained in major negotiations in recent years. Part-time work is not seen as one of the major issues in collective agreements. However, a four-hour minimum working time per day for part-time workers has been negotiated in the chemical sector.
Norway	In Norway, a 30-hour working week (five days of six hours), without loss of earnings, has long been the ambition of the Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions (Landsorganisasjonen i Norge, LO). In this context, full-time working is seen as a basic right, with part-time working considered as optional, and with priority given to part-time workers if full-time jobs become available. Equal status for shift workers, in terms of average weekly working hours, is a current issue of debate. The government has established an expert panel to look at the scope and practice of shift work in different sectors of activity. Unregulated hours and overtime hours are a major concern of the Federation of Norwegian Professional Associations (Akademikerne), which argues that recent government proposals regarding exemption from working time legislation are too wide in scope and should be restricted to senior staff. They argue for conditions to be included in individual written agreements, with the option of adding overtime hours worked to holiday entitlements. Voluntary part-time working has not been an issue in general. However, there are specific concerns, for example, regarding the creation of large numbers of small part-time shift work posts in the healthcare sector, where women are overrepresented.

Netherlands	During the past 10 years, trade unions in the Netherlands have sought to ensure greater scope for the exercise of individual choice within the framework of collective agreements through the ‘employment terms menu’ or ‘CAO à-la-carte’. Thus, they seek to maintain the reduced, 36-hour working week, but to allow those people who wish to work longer hours to do so. Overall, trade unions are particularly concerned with promoting work–life balance for both men and women, with a focus on childcare and the possibility of influencing individual working time. In this context, part-time working is viewed positively.
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Source: Trade union data

Annex 6 – Flexible working

Work schedules

Countries with the longest annual working hours	
Greece	In Greece, the standard eight-hour working day is seen as the norm, as is the standard five-day working week. Only in the retail sector is this not the case, and this is regarded as exceptional.
Poland	In Poland, only 39% of people stated that they never work on Saturdays (EWCS 2005) while 31% reported working seven days a week, and 44% either six or seven days a week.
Hungary	In Hungary, 80% of men and 86% of women had working arrangements with fixed start and end times, as reported in the 2004 LFS. The EWCS reports that the standard full-time work day (apart from shift workers) applies to 68% of men and 75% of women. Moreover, at least 75% of men and 82% of women do not work at weekends.
Czech Republic	In the Czech Republic, full-time work is the norm, applying to 95% of all workers (98% men, 91% women) according to the 2006 LFS. Almost 80% of workers have a fixed start and end time to their working day. Work also starts early in the Czech Republic – typically at 07.00, with women finishing at 15.00 and men at 16.00, with a third of workers starting work by 06.00 (especially in manufacturing). Only 5% of Czechs start work after 08.00, although the arrival of foreign companies is beginning to change these practices.
Estonia	In Estonia, 83% of employees had a fixed beginning and end time to their working day, with 77% working a 40-hour week and 74% a five-day week. However, 45% of people do not work the same number of hours each week (EWCS 2005) and Saturday and Sunday working has diminished. Regarding weekend work, in 2006, 60% of people reported that they never worked on Saturdays and 73% never worked on Sundays (compared with 53% and 66%, respectively, in 1997).
Countries with above average annual working hours	
Latvia	In Latvia, work starts early, often at 07.00, with relatively fixed starting and finishing times, at least in manufacturing, but with more flexibility in sectors such as construction and services. It is, therefore, more appropriate to speak of a standard time norm, rather than a fixed 08.00/09.00 to 17.00/18.00 norm.
Ireland	In Ireland, the standard full-time working day is regarded as the norm, along with the 40-hour/five-day working week.
Romania	In Romania, 87% of workers work 40 or more hours a week (EWCS 2005) and

	some 60% of workers work more than 45 hours a week (AMIGO, 2005). Some 49% of Romanians work more than a five-day week, leaving just 44% working a five-day week compared with the EU average of 64%. The five-day, 40-hour working week is, therefore, not regarded as the predominant pattern.
Cyprus	In Cyprus, the standard working week is 38 hours over five days, but the working day varies according to sector. In the public sector, working hours are 07.30/08.00 to 14.30/15.00, apart from Thursday when employees work two hours longer. In construction and industry, the working day is 07.30 to 15.30/16.00. In the private sector and services, the working day runs from 08.00/09.00 to 17.00/18.00.
Lithuania	In Lithuania, a full-time working day and a standard time norm are predominant and, according to the EWCS data, the average main paid job involves 41 hours a week.
Italy	In Italy, the 2002 QWS by ISFOL identified four categories of working practice: highly regular, with the same number of hours and days (67% of respondents); regular in terms of daily hours, but not the number of days (2.5%); regular in terms of days only (18%); irregular in terms of both hours and days (12%). The survey reported minimal differences between the position of men and women in these respects.
UK	In the UK, most workers work to a standard pattern, but flexitime and shift working are also prevalent in certain sectors.
Countries with average annual working hours	
Malta	In Malta, the standard full-time working day and the 40-hour/five-day week appears to be the norm with 73% of those in employment working the same number of hours a day and 82% working the same number of days a week. Moreover, 47% and 70% of employees never work on Saturday and Sunday, respectively, and 70% and 81% never work late evenings (20.00–23.00) or during the night (23.00–05.00) (according to a study conducted by the National Statistics Office (NSO) on working time in 2005). A large majority (75%) of employees work fixed hours, while 11% work core hours with variations in start and finishing times.
Portugal	In Portugal, the full-time working day is the norm. Overall, 72% of employees work five days a week and 50%–60% (50% in the 2005 EWCS and 60% in the Portuguese Working Conditions Survey (WCS) in 2000) also work a 40-hour week. A large proportion of start and finish times are fixed – for 83% of women and 77% of men (LFS 2004).
Slovakia	In Slovakia, a standard working week – 40 hours over five days – is the dominant form: 73% of workers usually work five days a week and 37% work between 39 and 41 hours. According to the Labour Code, daily working time cannot exceed nine hours and employers are obliged to distribute working time over five days when conditions allow.
Slovenia	In Slovenia, the standard full-time working day is seen to predominate, as does the standard 40-hour, five-day working week. However, according to the EWCS 2005, over 32% of those employed usually work six days a week in their main paid job, with 7% working seven days a week. This is regarded as reflecting the preference of employers to pay for overtime rather than recruit extra personnel, as well as the continuing importance of agriculture.
Finland	In Finland, according to the FQWLS, 68% of employees now start and finish work between the hours of 06.00 and 18.00 compared with 76% in 1984, implying increased flexibility over hours. Only 53% of employees work a traditional pattern

	of a five-day week and 35–40 hours a week.
Austria	In Austria, about two thirds of employees work five days a week and slightly more than 50% of employees work between 39 and 41 hours a week.
Bulgaria	In Bulgaria, a time span of 08.00 to 17.00 is typical in industry, with 09.00 to 18.00 more typical working hours in the public sector. The 40-hour, five-day working week is typical for around 40%–45% of workers.
Spain	In Spain, the standard arrangement is full-time working for five days a week, with an average of 38.5 hours and no shift working. Nevertheless, half of all Spanish employees work in the evening, and over a third work more than five evenings a month (EWCS 2005). Some 11% of Spanish employees work more than five nights a month, but these are concentrated in specific sectors – agriculture and fishing, extractive industries, hotels, restaurants and catering, and health and social work. These sectors also account for an above-average proportion of weekend working. Shift working is also important, although data differ in this regard: the EWCS 2005 recorded that shift work involves 22% of those employed, while the 2004 Survey on Quality of Life at the Workplace (in Spanish) recorded less than 16%. In terms of shift work, employees prefer to work permanent morning, afternoon or night shifts over having more flexible arrangements.
Countries with below average annual working hours	
Luxembourg	In Luxembourg, work schedules are closely regulated. Under the Labour Code, working time cannot exceed 40 hours a week and eight hours a day, apart from exceptions specified for different sectors or under collective agreements. In practice, 78% of employees work five days a week with an average working week of just over 38 hours. Some 68% of workers have fixed starting and finishing times.
Sweden	In Sweden, the 40-hour, five-day working week is the most common category (with 46% of employees working 39–41 hours a week), but is not really a norm. Some 66% of employees work the same number of days each week, and 45% the same number of hours (EWCS).
Belgium	In Belgium, around 60% of those in employment work some form of full-time day and, while evening and weekend work has increased slightly, shift working has fallen significantly.
Denmark	In Denmark, most people tend to work a five-day week and most collective agreements specify a 37-hour working week. There is a high degree of flexibility in working arrangements, however, and only 34% of people report that they work the same hours every day.
France	No details available.
Countries with the shortest annual working hours	
Germany	In Germany, 73% of employees work a five-day week and 41% work between 39 and 41 hours. Most collective agreements set an upper and lower limit on regular working time, often designed to deal with seasonal variations in sectors such as hotels, restaurants and catering, or agriculture and fishing. However, the number of hours worked a day differ for some 43% of the people surveyed (EWCS). A study of collective agreements in 24 sectors of economic activity, published by the Institute for Economic and Social Research (Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut, WSI) in 2005, also indicated that work schedules vary considerably between different areas of the economy: the norm being a five-day Monday-to-Friday week in metalworking, construction and financial services; five days between Monday and Saturday in retailing; and one rest day out of seven

	working days in postal services.
Norway	In Norway, 71% of employees reported their working time to be between 06.00 and 18.00, and data from the EWCS indicate that the five-day working week is by far the most typical, covering 64% of employees. However, the standard working time norm is 37.5 hours a week and not 40 hours, with 44% of employees reporting that they work between 35 and 38 hours. Few changes have seemingly occurred in recent years.
Netherlands	In the Netherlands, full-time work is no longer considered standard, with more men as well as women working part time, including working fewer days a week. Working between the hours of 08.00 and 18.00 is still the norm, however, except in sectors such as hotels and restaurants, and public transport.

Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2006; Parent-Thirion et al, EWCS, 2007; national-level surveys

Non-standard work arrangements

Countries with the longest annual working hours	
Greece	In Greece, shift working and/or weekend work is restricted to those sectors of the economy where it is difficult to avoid, such as the tourist industry. Attempts to extend non-standard work schedules – for example, to enable shops to open on Sundays – have been resisted, notably by smaller shopkeepers.
Poland	In Poland, it is reported that employers are increasingly interested in promoting non-standard work arrangements in order to expand their productive capacity.
Hungary	In Hungary, shift working in manufacturing is commonplace. However, the LFS indicates that 24% of employees in retail and repair, 50% in hotels and restaurants, as well as 27% in manufacturing carry out some evening, night and weekend working. The Trade Union of Commercial Employees (Kereskedelmi Alkalmazottak Szakszervezete, KASZ) has launched several campaigns over the past decade against weekend shop opening hours.
Czech Republic	In the Czech Republic, there does not appear to have been any significant growth in non-standard working arrangements, except in sectors where shift working is required (including tourism), or where there are specific agreements between employers and employees. The number of people working unsocial hours has fallen in recent years, with the largest number of people working atypical hours found in distribution, repair work, manufacturing and construction. Non-standard working arrangements are more common among older self-employed persons than among employees. Several reasons are given for people working unsocial hours – the desire to increase earnings, the nature of the sector or work, labour shortages or professional obligations (for example, in the case of doctors).
Estonia	No details available.
Countries with above average annual working hours	
Latvia	In Latvia, non-standard working arrangements are considered to be popular with both employers and employees in all sectors where it is possible to apply them. However, a requirement of the Labour Code – to include relevant information in a written employment contract – is often circumvented through verbal agreements, or through the use of service contracts, which are only subject to the Civil Code. Weekend working and other forms of non-standard working are not only due to seasonal factors, but also to the nature of various service sectors.
Ireland	In Ireland, non-standard working has expanded in many areas of economic activity,

	but particularly in retailing, with longer shop opening hours. Although these changes may have been driven by business interests, they have also been welcomed by people, notably women, who are seeking more flexible working arrangements. Seasonal influences on working time patterns remain important, not only in tourism but also in agriculture and the food industry.
Romania	In Romania, the extent of night working has remained broadly unchanged, at around 11.5% of total employment, with the highest concentration in healthcare (39%), catering (27%) and energy (24%). The proportion of Romanian workers who report that they never work nights, according to the EWCS 2005, is only half the EU average, with some 39% of workers reporting that they work more than five evenings a month. Some 75% of Romanian workers work Saturdays, although agriculture accounts for nearly half of the people concerned. Moreover, the high levels of weekend working in agriculture and retailing are partly attributable to high levels of self-employment in these sectors.
Cyprus	In Cyprus, non-standard working arrangements are generally only found in areas of the economy where there is no real alternative – such as seasonal tourism.
Lithuania	In Lithuania, the proportion of employees working nights, evenings and weekends seems to be close to the EU average. However, rapid economic growth has led to more non-standard working arrangements in areas where this is not strictly necessary, such as in retailing and construction. Such changes are judged to be driven by business concerns rather than a desire to improve work–life balance.
Italy	In Italy, the ISFOL QWS indicates that self-employed people work nights more frequently than employees (18% compared with 14%) and that many more men work nights than women (19% compared with 7%), partly as a result of 1977 legislation which effectively discourages night work among women. Differences between the work patterns of self-employed individuals and those of employees is even more marked in relation to Sunday working (46% compared with 22%) and men are also twice as likely to work Sundays as women.
UK	No details available.
Countries with average annual working hours	
Malta	In Malta, the majority of those working atypical hours are shop owners and their staff as well as those employed in catering. The number of people working non-standard hours also varies seasonally in response to tourism fluctuations. Only 10% of those employed consider that their working hours are inconvenient for their lifestyles (NSO study on working time, 2005), even though non-standard working appears to be spreading with the expansion of the private sector.
Portugal	In Portugal, a 2006 study on restaurants found night working to be common for 53% of employees, with 81% reporting that they work on Saturdays and 68% on Sundays. A third of those interviewed reported split-shift working, where they work both morning and afternoon shifts, separated by a long break.
Slovakia	In Slovakia, nearly 60% of those employed work on Saturdays and 37% on Sundays at least some of the time. This occurs in many sectors of the economy and is essentially driven by demand. Employees do not appear to be opposed to such atypical types of work, with 75% of those working Saturdays, 70% of those working Sundays, and 86% of those working evenings considering these arrangements to be satisfactory.
Slovenia	In Slovenia, non-standard working time arrangements are found in the manufacturing sector, in particular two or three-shift systems, reflecting technological or organisational requirements. They also exist in some market

	services – restaurants, tourism and personal services. No evidence is available of any particular changes in these areas. In the public sector, standard working hours still persist. Nevertheless, there are some limited examples of change, with, for example, shift working in publicly-provided childcare.
Finland	Working time arrangements in Finland have become much more flexible since the deep recession of the early 1990s. Collective agreements now provide opportunities to tailor working arrangements to the needs of both employers and employees at the local level. One recent priority – to encourage and assist older workers to remain in the labour market – has led to imaginative new schemes for this group, such as three weeks of working followed by one week off. Non-standard working in Finland varies significantly between sectors, with morning or evening work in agriculture, transport and retailing, and regular night work in transport, hotels, restaurants and catering, as well as health and social services.
Austria	In Austria, about 13% of employees regularly work evenings, although this proportion rises to almost 40% in the hotels, restaurants and catering sector. Weekend working is also common in this sector, as well as in commerce and health and social services.
Bulgaria	In Bulgaria, the spread of standard working time is the result of a number of factors: the construction sector boom which increased weekend as well as weekday working; the deregulation of working hours in retailing; and the high level of self-employment in the expanding tourist industry as well as in agriculture. As a result, some 59% of workers sometimes work Saturdays, and 39% sometimes work Sundays.
Spain	No details available.
Countries with below average annual working hours	
Luxembourg	No details available.
Sweden	In Sweden, the proportion of employees working weekends and mornings has remained relatively unchanged for two decades, while the numbers of people working evenings has increased. This is especially the case among manual workers, notably in construction, but also in manufacturing. More men than women work non-standard hours – 63% of men work non-standard hours at least one day a week (and 23% every day) compared with 56% of women (12% every day). Non-standard working hours are most commonly found in personal and cultural services, manufacturing, retailing, communications and healthcare, with 65% or more workers working non-standard hours at least one day a week. In manufacturing, 35% of those employed work non-standard hours every day.
Belgium	In Belgium, non-standard work is generally limited to those sectors and activities where it is difficult to avoid, although the government has introduced tax incentives to encourage flexible working arrangements as part of its strategy to improve competitiveness. Non-standard work is particularly important in healthcare, but early and late working is also expanding in relation to activities such as cleaning and security. The issue of shop opening hours is still being debated, although some controls in this regard have been relaxed.
Denmark	In Denmark, the proportion of people working ‘unsocial hours’ is relatively large, with 82% of self-employed workers and 55% of employees regularly working such hours. According to a 2005 report by the Danish Working Environment Authority (Arbejdstilsynet), this mainly occurs where workers are in contact with the general public. It is more common for men to work in the evenings and at night than women. However, much the same proportion (69%) of men and women who work at night find it convenient for their personal lives, as do 72% of those who work

	weekends.
France	No details available.
Countries with the shortest annual working hours	
Germany	In Germany, 60% of people do not generally work in the evenings, but 24% work more than five evenings a month and another 16% work up to five evenings a month. As regards weekend working, almost half of workers (48%) report that they do not work at all on Saturdays, but 37% work at least one Saturday a month, and 15% work three or more Saturdays a month. Sunday is generally regarded as a rest days in Germany and only 18% of people regularly work on this day.
Norway	In Norway, around 30% of people work outside regular hours, generally doing shifts, which involve 22% of all employees. Non-standard working time arrangements are most common in sectors where they are difficult to avoid. Overall, a modest increase can be seen in the amount of non-standard working, but mainly in those sectors where it was already well established.
Netherlands	In the Netherlands, non-standard time working – evening, night and weekend work – is mainly limited to sectors of the economy where it is difficult to avoid, unless employers and employees choose this option.

Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2006; Parent-Thirion et al, EWCS, 2007; national-level surveys

Organisation of work

Countries with the longest annual working hours	
Greece	In Greece, while working time is negotiated collectively, the organisation of work is seen essentially as a managerial prerogative, with flexibility generally considered to work to the advantage of the employer rather than the employee. No major differences are observed between types of jobs, or between men and women in terms of ability to organise their work.
Poland	In Poland, the EWCS reports that 79% of employees consider that they have no influence over their working time arrangements, with the main exceptions being those in more senior professional positions. Evidence of bad practice – seen as ‘negative flexibility’ – is presented by the National Labour Inspectorate (Państwowa Inspekcja Pracy, PIP) which monitors working time arrangements. Its 2006 annual report documents a range of abuses, such as: non-payment of overtime hours; failure to provide compensatory days off or rest periods; or exceeding legal overtime limits.
Hungary	In Hungary, there is some flexibility regarding work starting and finishing times. Moreover, working time ‘banking’ is specifically addressed in some company-level collective agreements, but the extent of this practice is limited. Case studies suggest that flexibility is generally introduced in the interests of employers. LFS results suggest that non-manual workers can influence their work schedules more than manual workers, but no differences are noted between public and private sector employees or between men and women.
Czech Republic	In the Czech Republic, employees have only limited flexibility with regard to working time arrangements. ‘Working on call’ is regarded as a potentially problematic form of flexibility. However, this form of work currently applies to very few (3.5%) employees, and basic parameters and limits for such arrangements are laid down in the Labour Code and

	collective agreements. The ‘banking’ of hours is seldom practiced, but this could change with the introduction of employee ‘working time accounts’ in particular with respect to home working and self-employment.
Estonia	<p>In Estonia, higher status employees, such as managers and officials, have more possibility to determine their working arrangements than, for example, machine operators. On the other hand, unskilled workers are reported to have more possibilities than skilled workers – 17% compared with 6%. According to LFS data, 26% of workers in agriculture and fishing are able to plan their own work schedules.</p> <p>As regards positive and negative flexibility, a Working Life Barometer report in 2005 in Estonia reported that 70% of part-time work is carried out voluntarily, and that 59% of ‘teleworkers’ and 42% of part-time workers are satisfied with their flexibility arrangements.</p>
Countries with above average annual working hours	
Latvia	In Latvia, the extent to which individual workers can influence their working time arrangements is seen to depend partly on the nature of the work (notably the extent to which it involves team working or contact with customers), and partly on the attitude of the employer. While it is recognised that people with higher ranking or better paid jobs generally have more control over their working arrangements, this advantage is often counter-balanced by more extensive obligations.
Ireland	No details available.
Romania	In Romania, 85% of employees state that their work schedules are set by their employer, with 30% of employees reporting that these schedules change daily (nearly twice the average EU rate). Work schedules in the public sector are seen to be much more predictable than in the private sector.
Cyprus	In Cyprus, it is uncommon for employees to set their own work starting and finishing times in either the private or public sector, and there are very limited opportunities to bank working hours. As in other countries, those with higher status jobs may have greater flexibility, but often at the cost of working longer hours. The opportunities for flexible working arrangements are considered to be greater in the private sector than in the public sector.
Lithuania	In Lithuania, rigidity of working time is considered to be much more prevalent than flexibility, with the banking of hours, for example, being largely unknown. According to a 2006 survey ‘ Attractive workplace for all ’, ‘ordinary workers and experts are normally required to adhere strictly to the working time order’. Insofar as there is flexibility, it is considered to be greater in the private than in the public sector.
Italy	In Italy, according to a 2004 survey by the National Institute for Statistics (Istituto Nazionale di Statistica, Istat) on working time organisation, 27.5% of workers enjoy flexible work arrangements to some extent, with nearly 8% of them on ‘individual time accounts’, 6% on individual agreements, and 4% able to exercise full flexibility regarding working time. Outside of agriculture (where over 40% of workers report having some form of flexibility), the highest amount of working time flexibility can be found in personal services (36% of workers) and business services (33%). Flexible working arrangements are most common for those working relatively short hours each week (less than 15 hours) or relatively

	long hours (over 40 hours). Types of arrangements vary by company size and, overall, working time flexibility tends to increase with occupational status. According to the 2006 'Changing work' survey by IRES, around a third of flexible working time arrangements are determined unilaterally by the employer; over a quarter through collective agreements; over a quarter through individual agreements; and only some 12.5% decided mainly by employees.
UK	In the UK, senior executives and professionals are seen as having the most control over their working time. Nevertheless, they also tend to work the longest hours, with formal flexitime arrangements mainly applying to non-manual and public sector employees in large organisations. According to the WERS 2004 managerial survey, provisions are in place for flexible working arrangements in a large proportion of UK workplaces. For example: 70% of workplaces have provisions enabling employees to reduce hours from full time to part time; 35% offer flexitime; 31% job sharing; and 26% homeworking. However, it is less clear to what extent the possibilities are taken up by employees in practice.
Countries with average annual working hours	
Malta	In Malta, NSO statistics for 2006 show that, while 31% of the working population can modify their normal working hours for family reasons by at least one hour, some 44% cannot, a disproportionate number of these being women. Likewise, the fourth EWCS reports that 73% of Maltese workers have fixed starting and finishing times, and that 83% have no possibility of making changes. The 'banking' of hours seems to be seldom practiced, with more than half of both male and female employees reporting that it is not possible to work extra hours on particular days in order to take other days off for family reasons. As in other countries, non-manual and professional workers have more possibilities than others to control working hours.
Portugal	In Portugal, according to the 2005 EWCS, the working schedules of some 86% of employees are set by their employers with no possibility for change. Both the EWCS and the LFS report very small proportions of employees having self-determined work schedules, and the possibility of 'banking' hours is available to less than 1% of employees. Flexible arrangements are viewed as being primarily designed to suit the needs of employers; however, no surveys appear to exist to verify this.
Slovakia	In Slovakia, only around 1% of employed people have the opportunity to determine their own work schedules. However, 4.5% of men and 6% of women effectively have the opportunity to 'bank' hours and take time off at a later stage. The Labour Code obliges employers to negotiate working time issues with employees or their representatives, but employees may not always feel able to insist on their rights. Flexible working time arrangements most commonly apply to those in higher ranking jobs. However, the incidence of such arrangements also varies between sectors of activity, being highest in public administration and defence (38% of employees), financial services (36%) and construction (over 30%). There appear to be no significant differences between men and women.
Slovenia	In Slovenia, some 58% of employees have fixed starting and finishing times to their working day (EWCS 2005), normally reflecting the type and organisation of work. It is usually possible to 'bank' hours, particularly overtime hours, which can be used later as days off. Self-determined working times are rare (reported by 7% of employees only) and limited to

	specific professions. Surveys suggest that the incidence of employer forms of flexibility are high, even if agreed with employees or their representatives, and that workers in relatively low-paid jobs in manufacturing and market services are attracted to shift work as a way of increasing their earnings.
Finland	Data for Finland indicate that around half of those employed have no fixed starting or finishing times to their working day. While opportunities to ‘bank’ hours are only slightly more prevalent than in the rest of the EU, opportunities to ‘bank’ days are more than double the EU average, applying to around 16% of employees. The opportunity for people to determine their own work schedule is also double the EU average, applying to about 10% of employees, although less to women than men.
Austria	In Austria, flexitime agreements have been established under which it is possible to extend normal working hours up to 10 hours a day – for example, to create a four-day, 40-hour working week. However, no information is apparently available on how much these possibilities are used in practice. Under such arrangements, the banking of hours is possible, but with the work schedules generally laid down by the employer. Flexibility is seen to vary primarily with status and occupation, and much less so between men and women. Whether flexibility is viewed as positive or negative depends very much on the particular circumstances in a company. Trade unions suspect, for example, that some part-time working arrangements, in particular ‘just in time’ systems, fail to meet legal requirements.
Bulgaria	In Bulgaria, most workers (73%) have fixed working times, with arrangements set by employers in 92% of cases, and little opportunity for employees to choose between different fixed working time schedules, adapt working hours or fix their own hours of work (EWCS). A report on ‘Combining employment and family life’, published in 2005 by the National Statistical Institute (Национален Статистически Институт, NSI), suggests, however, that for 25% of employees it is usually possible to change working hours and to take time off for family reasons, while for 35% it is impossible to do so. The Agency for Social Analyses, through the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP), also reports that around a third of people (women and men) wish to do more paid work.
Spain	In Spain, nearly 79% of employees have fixed starting and finishing times to the working day, with fewer having some form of flexibility regarding working arrangements than elsewhere in the EU. Obstacles to flexibility include traditions such as long lunches, a division of jobs by gender and reluctance by employers to address work–life balance issues through collective bargaining, preferring to treat matters on an individual basis. A range of public policy initiatives have, however, been undertaken, with some agreements between the social partners designed to improve flexibility and address issues of work–life balance and gender equality, including a pilot project on ‘teleworking’ in the public sector.
Countries with below average annual working hours	
Luxembourg	In Luxembourg, 65% of workers consider that they have little flexibility with respect to their working time (EWCS 2005). About 10% of employees can ‘bank’ hours, around 1% can ‘bank’ days and 3% can determine their own schedules of work, with no major differences found between women and men. Whether flexibility is seen as positive or negative appears to vary by sector. In financial services, hours are

	<p>designed to suit both employers and employees, while in industry they are more likely to be determined by the production system in place. A 1995 study conducted by the Centre for Population, Poverty and Socioeconomic Policy Studies (Centre d'Études de Populations, de Pauvreté et de Politiques Socio-Economiques/International Networks for Studies in Technology, Environment, Alternatives, Development, CEPS/INSTEAD) indicated that part-time working arrangements were easier to introduce in the public sector and that new social measures to achieve a better work–life balance were most likely to appear in this sector first.</p>
Sweden	<p>In Sweden, 60% of employees have fixed starting and finishing times for work. Overall, 40% have some flexibility in arranging their working time. While over a third of employees cannot change their working times, 44% can (within certain limits) and 14% can determine these themselves. According to a study conducted by LO, higher-paid employees have much greater flexibility than lower-paid workers, with 92% of employees with earnings of €4,000 or more a month having flexible working time compared with 31% of those earning less than €1,700. Moreover, the 'banking' of hours is considered to be common among employees.</p>
Belgium	<p>In Belgium, the ability to influence starting and finishing times applies to only a limited number of workers, although around 30% of employers have introduced some arrangement of this kind. Surveys among employees indicate a strong preference for working fewer days and a dislike of variable working time schedules set by employers. Flexible working arrangements seem to be more common in private services than in the public sector.</p>
Denmark	<p>In Denmark, employees are seen to have more flexibility in organising their working time than those in other parts of the EU. Nevertheless, 56% of those employed have fixed starting and finishing times, and 34% work the same number of hours each day. Only around 1% of employees have the possibility of 'banking' hours, but some 18% are able to 'bank' days, with little difference between men and women in this regard. Again, those in higher-level jobs have more possibilities (half of men and a third of women) to influence their working time arrangements than those in lower-level positions (20% or less of those concerned).</p>
France	<p>In France, available evidence indicates that only 13% of employees have no choice concerning working hours and holidays, 16% have total choice, and some 70% have some measure of choice regarding holidays. As regards flexibility generally, working time legislation has introduced the possibility of 'banking' working hours. However, this option appears to have been taken by only 6% of employers, and less than half of these have introduced the provision in practice.</p>
Countries with the shortest annual working hours	
Germany	<p>In Germany, only around 2% of employees are believed to be able to determine their work schedules, as indicated in the 2004 LFS, with around 50% of women and 45% of men having fixed starting and finishing hours for work. A significant proportion of employees are covered, however, by schemes that enable them to 'bank' working hours (19% men, 18% women) or days (21% men, 17.5% women), although the incidence of such schemes varies considerably between sectors. According to a 2004 study on flexible working time arrangements, carried out by the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag, DIHK), nearly two thirds of companies</p>

	<p>had flexible working time arrangements, with 40% providing flexible weekly hours – the most common and popular type of arrangement. Such arrangements are most common in insurance (50%), hotels and restaurants (47%) and retailing (43%). The second most popular form of flexible working arrangement is ‘flexitime’, allowing for variable hours around fixed core working hours. Flexitime is used by a third of companies overall. More specifically, this arrangement is applied in 75% of companies in printing and electrical engineering, but in less than 20% of companies in retailing and less than 10% in construction. With regard to construction companies, according to a report on the sector, ‘annual working time accounts’ (with hours booked over a year-long period) are the preferred option of over 50% of the companies surveyed because of the seasonal nature of the work.</p>
Norway	<p>In Norway, as the EWCS 2005 indicates, over 60% of employees are able to partially or fully adapt their working time. However, the proportion of employees reporting that they actually work flexible times is smaller than in the other Nordic countries. This finding is supported by the Norwegian survey of living conditions in 2006, conducted by Statistics Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrås, SSB), which suggests that some 30% of employees work a form of regulated flexitime. It should be noted that, as of the beginning of 2006, employees under the Working Environment Act are entitled to work flexible hours, provided that this can be accomplished without major inconvenience to the company. Working time accounts are common – applying to 32% of men and 27% of women employed – with similar numbers reporting that they are able to ‘bank’ hours or days. The proportion of employees able to fully determine their hours of work is, however, slightly below the EU average and less than half the levels in Sweden and Denmark (at just under 6%). No clear evidence is available on whether flexible working has positive or negative effects. However, the healthcare sector seems to be one in which the ‘part-time culture’ meets the needs of the great majority of employees.</p>
Netherlands	<p>In the Netherlands, flexible working time arrangements are common with respect to office work, including the possibility of negotiating four working days of nine hours each, to make up a 36-hour working week. The ‘banking’ of hours is considered uncommon, but this arrangement is sometimes used to meet seasonal variations in workloads. The opportunity to fully determine personal work schedules is mainly limited to homeworkers and ‘teleworkers’. To prevent abuse of flexible working arrangements – as regards, for example, ‘on-call’ workers (who account for under 2% of all employees) or temporary workers (3% of all employees) – a Law on flexibility and security was passed in 1999. Nevertheless, it is reported that some employers still seem to abuse such arrangements.</p>

Source: Eurostat, LFS, 2006; Parent-Thirion et al, EWCS, 2007; national-level surveys

Annex 7 – Average usual hours worked by employees

These tables on working time in the EU (Eurostat and LFI) are available on the [Eurofound](#) website.

Annex 8 – Country codes and abbreviations

Country code	Country name
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AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CY	Cyprus
CZ	Czech Republic
DE	Germany
DK	Denmark
EE	Estonia
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FI	Finland
FR	France
HU	Hungary
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
LV	Latvia
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
NO	Norway
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SE	Sweden
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
UK	United Kingdom

Country abbreviations used

EU15 – 15 EU Member States before May 2004 (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom)

EU25 – EU15 and the 10 Member States that joined the EU in May 2004

EU27 – 27 EU Member States, comprising the EU15, the 10 new Member States that joined the EU in May 2004, in addition to Bulgaria and Romania, which joined the EU in January 2007

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