

# **Reconciliation between work, private and family life in the European Union**



**2009 edition**

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# Introduction





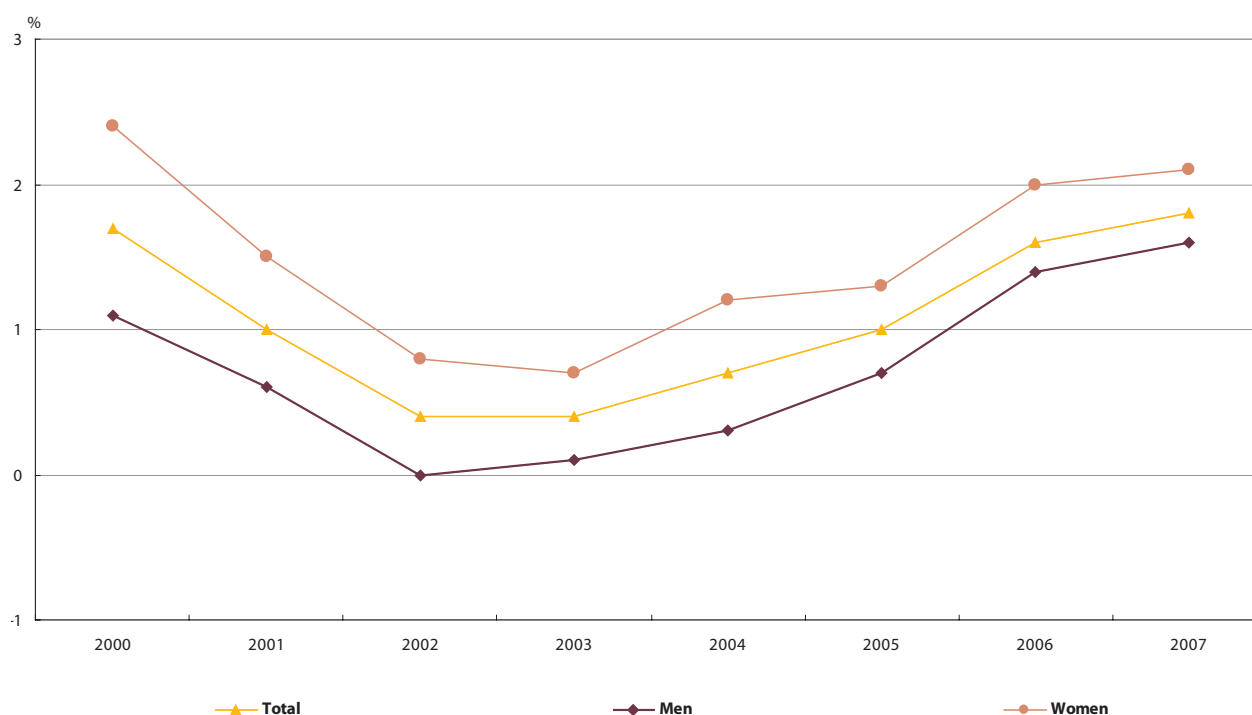
# Main labour market indicators

## 1.1 Employment growth

The years from 2000 to 2007 saw a positive labour market development, with the number of persons employed increasing each year. However, changes in employment depend on the economic cycle: as for economic growth, growth in employment has not been constant over the entire period. Starting from +1.7% in 2000, the highest rate of the period under review, employment growth dwindled to a mere 0.4% in 2002 and 2003, before gradually increasing to reach 1.6% in 2006 and 1.8% in 2007.

The total number of persons employed in the EU is of course a summary measure: employment growth may vary considerably across different segments of the labour market. Considering employment growth among men and women, Figure 1.1 shows that while growth rates for both sexes followed similar paths, growth in female employment was consistently and considerably higher than growth in male employment.

**Figure 1.1:** EU-27 employment growth, 2000–2007



Note: The indicator "employment growth" gives the change in percentage from one year to another of the total number of employed persons on the economic territory. The indicator is based on the European System of Accounts. The Labour Force Survey breakdowns are applied to provide results by gender.

Source: Eurostat (National Accounts and Labour Force Survey)

The faster progress in female employment becomes even more visible when looking at cumulative growth over the entire period. Employment grew by an average of 7.0% between 2000 and 2007, but this includes a relative increase of 10.1% for women, against only 4.7% for men. In absolute terms, this means that between 2000 and 2007 employment in the EU increased by 14.7 million persons, of which 9.1 million were

women and 5.6 million men. All in all, the EU economy provided 224.2 million persons with employment in 2007.

In assessing these developments, it should be noted that the European Union entered into recession in 2008, which is expected to adversely affect the labour market.



**Table 1.1:** Change in employment in the EU-27 between 2000 and 2007*EU-27 employment, absolute and percentage change*

	Total employment (in thousands)		Change 2000-2007	
	2000	2007	Absolute terms (thousands)	Relative (% growth)
<b>Total</b>	209 472	224 198	14 726	7.0
<b>Men</b>	118 767	124 355	5 588	4.7
<b>Women</b>	90 705	99 843	9 138	10.1

Source: Eurostat (National Accounts and Labour Force Survey)

The development of employment in the EU outlined so far and condensed into a cumulative growth figure of +7.0% from 2000 to 2007 is the result of differing movements in the Member States. In four Member States, employment in 2007 was more than 20% higher than in 2000, with Luxembourg topping the league at +26.3%, followed by Spain, Ireland and Cyprus. On the other hand, over the same period employment growth was very weak in Portugal, Germany and Hungary. As can be seen, the new Member States did not fare uniformly or consistently better than others in the creation of employment.

A closer look at growth rate patterns over time given in Table 1.2 reveals that a number of Member States did not follow the overall EU pattern. Most noteworthy perhaps was the decline in EU growth from 2000 to 2002, which was mainly

attributable to Spain, Germany, France and a number of other old Member States. In contrast, many new Member States, and the three Baltic States in particular, saw significant improvements in employment growth over the same period. On the other hand, the acceleration observed in 2005 and 2006 was more broadly based on employment gains in most EU Member States — only Cyprus and Lithuania witnessed important declines in employment growth between 2005 and 2006. Employment growth across Member States broke step thereafter: from 2006 to 2007, the acceleration continued in some Member States such as Malta, Cyprus, Lithuania, Slovenia and Germany, while it stalled in others — most markedly in Estonia, where growth dropped from +5.4% in 2006 to +0.7% in 2007.

**Table 1.2:** Employment growth in EU Member States, 2000–2007*Annual percentage change in the number of persons employed*

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	Change 2000-2007
<b>EU-27</b>	1.7	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.7	1.0	1.6	1.8	7.0
<b>EU-15</b>	2.2	1.4	0.7	0.5	0.8	1.0	1.5	1.6	7.7
<b>BE</b>	2.0	1.4	-0.1	0.0	0.7	1.3	1.4	1.8	6.7
<b>BG</b>	4.9	-0.8	0.2	3.0	2.6	2.7	3.3	2.8	14.7
<b>CZ</b>	-0.2	0.5	0.6	-1.3	0.3	1.0	1.6	2.7	5.4
<b>DK</b>	0.5	0.9	0.0	-1.1	-0.6	1.0	2.0	2.7	5.0
<b>DE</b>	1.9	0.4	-0.6	-0.9	0.4	-0.1	0.6	1.7	1.6
<b>EE</b>	-1.5	0.9	1.3	1.4	0.0	2.0	5.4	0.7	12.2
<b>IE</b>	4.6	3.0	1.8	2.0	3.1	4.7	4.3	3.6	24.7
<b>EL</b>	0.5	0.1	2.3	1.0	2.3	1.0	2.1	1.3	10.5
<b>ES</b>	5.1	3.2	2.4	3.1	3.5	4.1	3.9	3.0	25.7
<b>FR</b>	2.7	1.8	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.0	1.7	5.9
<b>IT</b>	1.9	2.0	1.7	1.5	0.4	0.5	2.0	1.1	9.7
<b>CY</b>	1.7	2.2	2.1	3.8	3.8	3.6	1.8	3.2	22.2
<b>LV</b>	-2.9	2.2	2.3	1.0	1.1	1.5	4.8	3.5	17.6
<b>LT</b>	-4.0	-3.8	3.6	2.2	0.0	2.5	1.7	2.9	9.3
<b>LU</b>	5.5	5.6	3.2	1.8	2.2	2.9	3.7	4.5	26.3
<b>HU</b>	1.3	0.2	0.0	1.3	-0.7	0.0	0.6	-0.1	1.4
<b>MT</b>	8.4	1.8	0.6	1.0	-0.6	1.3	1.3	3.0	8.6
<b>NL</b>	2.2	2.1	0.5	-0.5	-0.9	0.5	1.8	2.5	6.1
<b>AT</b>	1.3	0.7	0.0	0.3	0.4	1.1	1.5	1.7	5.9
<b>PL</b>	:	:	:	:	-0.3	1.0	1.9	2.5	:
<b>PT</b>	2.1	1.8	0.6	-0.6	-0.1	-0.3	0.5	0.0	1.9
<b>RO</b>	:	:	:	0.0	-1.7	-1.5	0.7	:	:
<b>SI</b>	1.3	0.5	1.5	-0.4	0.3	-0.1	1.5	3.0	6.4
<b>SK</b>	-2.0	0.6	0.1	1.1	-0.2	1.4	2.3	2.1	7.5
<b>FI</b>	2.2	1.5	1.0	0.1	0.4	1.4	1.8	2.2	8.5
<b>SE</b>	2.5	2.1	0.0	-0.6	-0.7	0.3	1.7	2.2	5.0
<b>UK</b>	1.4	1.0	0.6	1.0	1.0	1.3	0.7	0.7	6.4
<b>NO</b>	0.6	0.4	0.4	-1.0	0.5	1.2	3.6	4.1	9.4

Notes: ':' missing value.

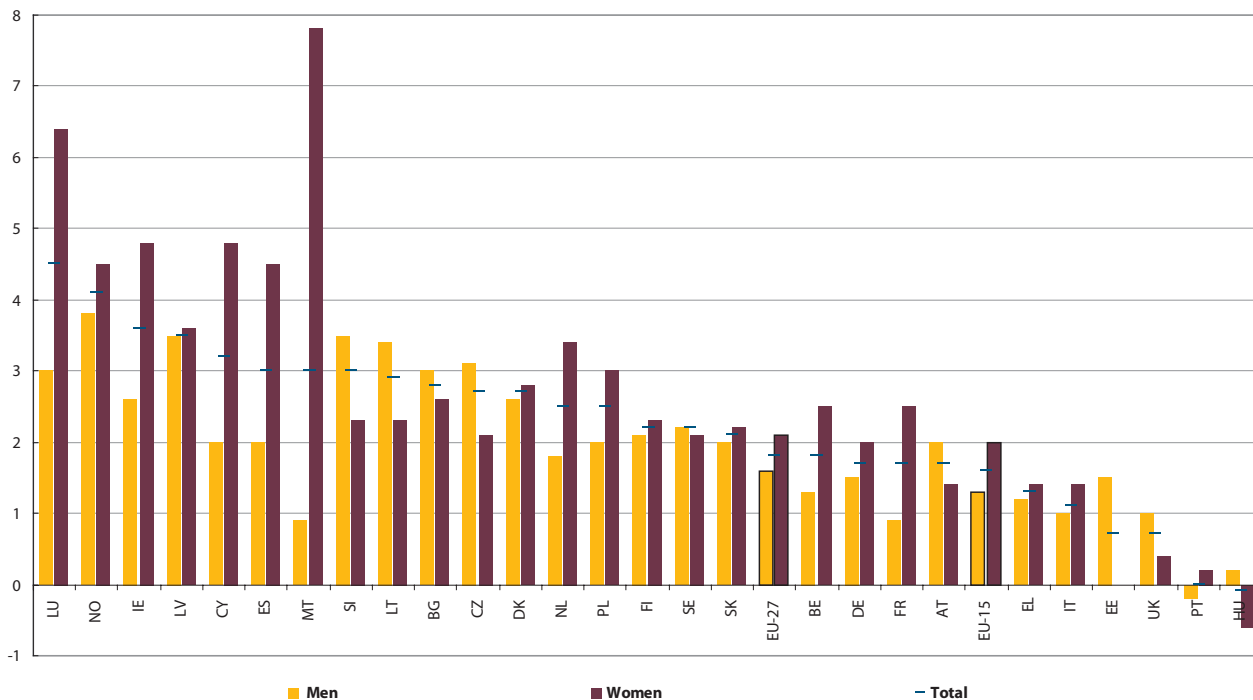
Source: Eurostat, National Accounts.

Many Member States exhibited healthy employment growth in 2007, led by Luxembourg with +4.5%, Ireland, Latvia, Cyprus, Malta and Spain, all with growth rates of 3% or above, followed by nine Member States with growth rates in excess of

2%. Combined with weaker figures elsewhere, notably in Portugal, where employment stagnated, and Hungary, where it declined marginally, this led to an overall growth rate of +1.8% in 2007.

**Figure 1.2:** Employment growth for the EU Member States, 2007

*Annual percentage change in the number of persons employed*



Source: Eurostat (National Accounts and Labour Force Survey)

As Figure 1.1 did for the EU-27, additional insight into employment growth in the Member States can be gained from looking at male and female employment separately. Figure 1.2 breaks down the national employment growth rates by gender for the year 2007. Female employment progressed strongly in Malta (+7.8%) and Luxembourg (+6.4%), but also in Ireland, Cyprus and Spain (all at +4.5% or above). The highest growth rates for male employment were markedly lower: around +3.5% in Latvia, Slovenia and Lithuania. At the lower end of the scale however, the worst result for female employment – a drop by 0.6% in Hungary – was also more extreme than the worst result for male employment – a drop by 0.2% in

Portugal. Apart from Hungary, female employment growth was also very weak in Estonia, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

This leads to the observation that employment growth in EU Member States was not universally higher among women than men in 2007. Female employment did grow faster in a majority of Member States, and strikingly so in some, but the opposite was true in a few others. With the exception of Estonia however, where employment growth was entirely accounted for by men, imbalances in favour of men were less pronounced than those in favour of women.



## 1.2 Employment rates and EU targets

The creation of new jobs coupled with measures aiming to keep people in work — such as flexible working arrangements, better childcare facilities and reduced incentives for early retirement — have an impact on the employment rate, i.e. the proportion of persons employed as a percentage of the total population of the same age class.

According to the European Labour Force Survey, the average employment rate in the EU-27 amounted to 65.4% in 2007, up by 0.9 percentage points compared to 2006 and 4.6 percentage points compared to 2000. In other words, for every hundred EU citizens aged 15 to 64, sixty-five were in gainful employment, be it in a full-time job, a part-time occupation or a fixed-term employment contract. The remaining 35 were either unemployed or inactive. Despite the progression in the overall employment rate, the European Union considers that more efforts are needed to increase employment rates, so as to ensure sustainable economic growth and social cohesion.

### The Lisbon targets

The Lisbon European Council launched an ambitious initiative in 2000 aimed at raising employment rates (see box below). In 2005 the Council recognised that insufficient progress had been achieved and decided to relaunch the strategy by focusing on economic growth and employment. A new set of employment guidelines for the period 2005–2008 was adopted and confirmed for the period 2008 - 2010 with a renewed focus on jobs, maintaining the overall goal of achieving full employment, quality and productivity at work as well as social and territorial cohesion. Three broad areas of action were defined:

- to attract and retain people in employment, increase the labour supply and modernise social protection systems;
- to improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises;
- to increase investment in human capital through better education and skills.

### Lisbon targets

The Lisbon European Council of 2000 set a strategic goal, over the decade 2000–2010, for the EU “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”. It specifically stated that the overall aim of employment and economic policies should be to raise the employment rate to as close to 70% as possible by 2010 and to increase the employment rate for women to more than 60% by the same year, not least in order to reinforce the sustainability of social protection systems. In that context, another explicitly stated target of EU policy is to specifically increase female participation in the labour market and to reduce gender gaps in employment, unemployment and pay.

In December 2007 the European Commission presented a progress report and a new Community Lisbon Programme (CLP) for 2008–2010, which were both endorsed by the Spring European Council in 2008. In parallel, the European Commission was asked to start reflecting on the future of the Lisbon Strategy after the year 2010.

The Commission's progress report on the renewed Lisbon Strategy<sup>(1)</sup> was quite positive about the progress in achieving the targets. Although Member States have implemented structural reforms, they were neither implemented at the same pace nor with the same amount of determination. The new CLP 2008-2010<sup>(2)</sup> is based on ten key objectives with corresponding actions. The majority of these objectives are

directly or indirectly linked to labour market development (skills, strengthening of small and medium enterprises, immigration, competition, innovation).

The general growth in employment recorded at EU level has brought the overall employment rate (65.4% in 2007) closer to the Lisbon target, but it is still 4.6 percentage points short of what it should be in 2010.

Between 2000 and 2007 the female employment rate at EU-27 level increased by 4.6 percentage points, reaching 58.3% in 2007. With a further 1.7 percentage points to achieve, the 2010 target seems to be within reach.

<sup>(1)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Spring European Council – Strategic report on the renewed Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs: launching the new cycle (2008-2010) – Keeping up the pace of change – COM (2007) 803 final

<sup>(2)</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Proposal for a Community Lisbon Programme 2008-2010 – COM (2007) 804 final

## Employment rates in the Member States

The above-mentioned average EU-27 employment rate hides substantial differences across individual Member States, ranging from a minimum of 54.6% in Malta to a maximum of 77.1% in Denmark.

As shown in Table 1.3, seven Member States have already achieved the 2010 Lisbon targets regarding both overall employment rates and female employment rates: Denmark, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. Moreover, a further seven Member States have reached the target regarding female employment rates.

The overall employment rate has progressed in most countries, with the exception of Romania, where in 2007 it stood 4.2 percentage points lower than in 2000. A standstill, or even a marginal decrease, was observed in Malta, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The largest increases in employment rates were noted in Bulgaria and Latvia (around 11 percentage points) but also in Estonia and Spain (+9 percentage points). Nevertheless, Italy, Hungary, Malta, Poland and Romania are still between 10 and 15 percentage points below the Lisbon Strategy target for 2010.

**Table 1.3:** Employment rates and progress towards Lisbon targets, 2007

*Employed persons aged 15–64, as a percentage of the total population of the same age*

	Total			Women		
	2007 (%)	Change 2000-2007 (percentage points)	Gap below 2010 Lisbon target: 70% (percentage points)	2007 (%)	Change 2000-2007 (percentage points)	Gap below 2010 Lisbon target: 70% (percentage points)
<b>EU-27</b>	65.4	3.2	4.6	58.3	4.6	1.7
<b>EU-15</b>	67.0	3.6	3.0	59.7	5.6	0.3
<b>BE</b>	62.0	1.5	8.0	55.3	3.8	4.7
<b>BG</b>	61.7	11.3	8.3	57.6	11.3	2.4
<b>CZ</b>	66.1	1.1	3.9	57.3	0.4	2.7
<b>DK</b>	77.1	0.8	>	73.2	1.6	>
<b>DE</b>	69.4	3.8	0.6	64.0	5.9	>
<b>EE</b>	69.4	9.0	0.6	65.9	9.0	>
<b>IE</b>	69.1	3.9	0.9	60.6	6.7	>
<b>EL</b>	61.4	4.9	8.6	47.9	6.2	12.1
<b>ES</b>	65.6	9.3	4.4	54.7	13.4	5.3
<b>FR</b>	64.6	2.5	5.4	60.0	4.8	0.0
<b>IT</b>	58.7	5.0	11.3	46.6	7.0	13.4
<b>CY</b>	71.0	5.3	>	62.4	8.9	>
<b>LV</b>	68.3	10.8	1.7	64.4	10.6	>
<b>LT</b>	64.9	5.8	5.1	62.2	4.5	>
<b>LU</b>	64.2	1.5	5.8	56.1	6.0	3.9
<b>HU</b>	57.3	1.0	12.7	50.9	1.2	9.1
<b>MT</b>	54.6	0.4	15.4	35.7	2.6	24.3
<b>NL</b>	76.0	3.1	>	69.6	6.1	>
<b>AT</b>	71.4	2.9	>	64.4	4.8	>
<b>PL</b>	57.0	2.0	13.0	50.6	1.7	9.4
<b>PT</b>	67.8	-0.6	2.2	61.9	1.4	>
<b>RO</b>	58.8	-4.2	11.2	52.8	-4.7	7.2
<b>SI</b>	67.8	5.0	2.2	62.6	4.2	>
<b>SK</b>	60.7	3.9	9.3	53.0	1.5	7.0
<b>FI</b>	70.3	3.1	>	68.5	4.3	>
<b>SE</b>	74.2	1.2	>	71.8	0.9	>
<b>UK</b>	71.5	0.3	>	65.5	0.8	>
<b>IS</b>	85.1	:	>	80.8	:	>
<b>NO</b>	76.8	-0.7	>	74.0	0.4	>
<b>CH</b>	78.6	0.3	>	71.6	2.3	>

Notes: The column "Gap below 2010 target" is for illustrative purposes only, since the 2010 target applies to the EU and not individual Member States. – The symbol ">" indicates that the target has been exceeded by the Member State.

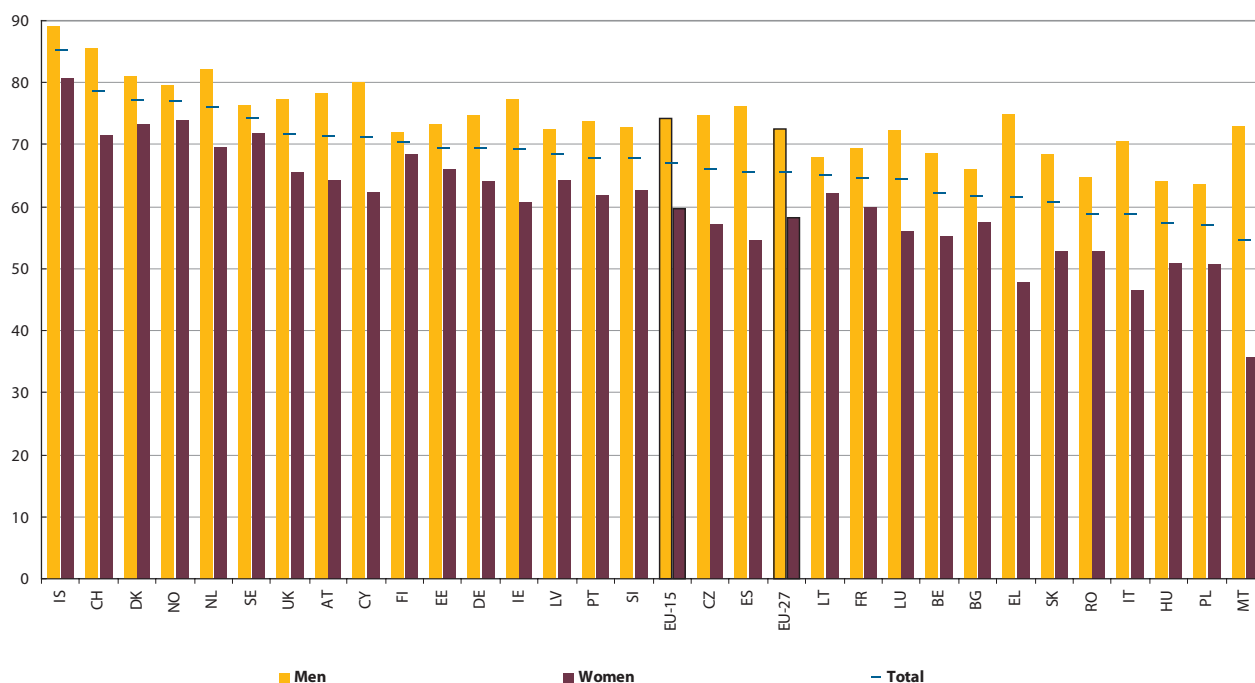
Source: Eurostat, LFS

Expectedly, the female employment rates remain below those of men in all Member States (see Figure 1.3); despite considerable progress, the disparity remained wide (between 10 and 15 percentage points) in Spain, Italy and Greece and

especially in Malta (19 percentage points). Conversely, the gender difference was very narrow in Lithuania, Sweden and Finland.

**Figure 1.3:** Employment rates for the EU Member States, 2007

*Employed persons aged 15–64 as a percentage of the total population of the same age*



Source: Eurostat, LFS.

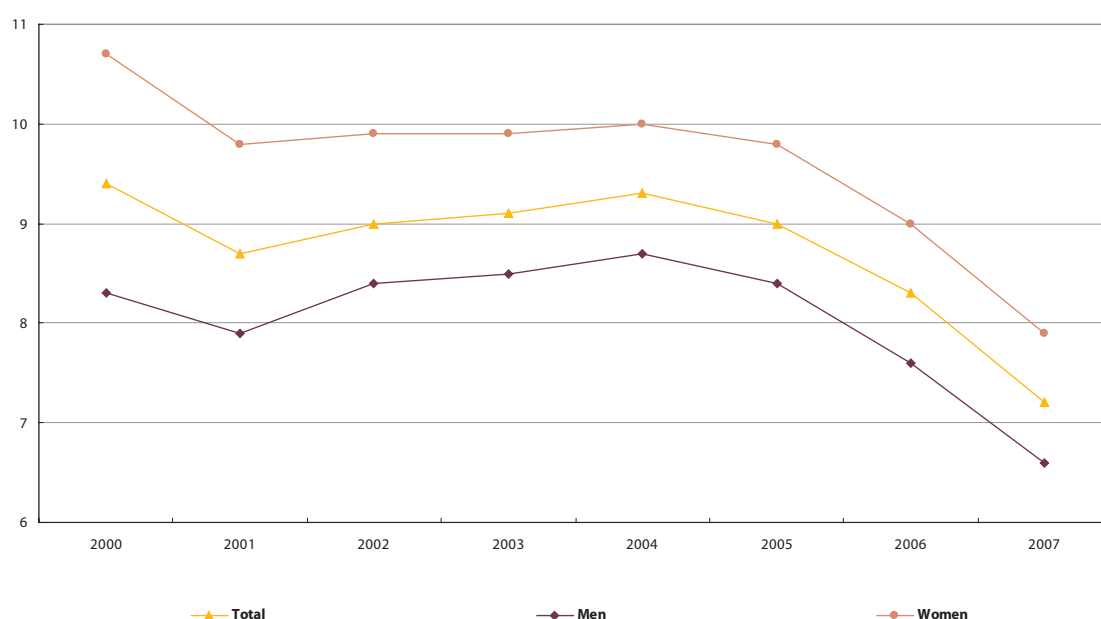
## 1.3 Unemployment rates

Economic growth and the robust labour market recovery have had an impact on the EU-27 unemployment rates: in 2007, these were at their lowest since the beginning of the decade. The overall unemployment rate stood at 7.2%, whereas it still amounted to 9.4% in 2000. As shown in Figure 1.4, after an

initial drop between 2000 and 2001 and a moderate and very gradual increase between 2001 and 2004, a marked decline was registered from 2004 onwards, a trend that was intensified in 2006 and sustained into 2007. In that year the male unemployment rate stood at 6.6%, against 7.9% for women.

**Figure 1.4:** EU-27 unemployment rates, 2000–2007

*Unemployed persons aged 15–64 as a percentage of the active population of the same age*



Source: Eurostat, LFS.

Focusing on the situation in the individual Member States, unemployment rates were highest in Slovakia (11.2%) and Poland (9.7%), in spite of noticeable reductions over the past years (see Table 1.4). The three Baltic States and Bulgaria also registered a significant decrease in overall unemployment rates over the period 2000–2007, which have now dropped below the EU average.

Among the larger EU economies, unemployment was most notably reduced in Spain and Italy, whereas it declined only

slightly in France and the United Kingdom. Conversely, the unemployment rate increased over the review period in Germany.

In 2007, Germany and France, which weigh heavily in the EU-27 average, registered unemployment rates of 8.7% and 8.0% respectively. At the other end of the scale, Denmark and the Netherlands were the only Member States to report rates below 4%.



**Table 1.4:** Unemployment rates, 2007 and change 2000–2007*Unemployed persons aged 15–64 as a percentage of the active population of the same age*

	Percentage			Change 2000-2007		
	Total	Men	Women	Percentage points		
				Total	Men	Women
<b>EU-27</b>	7.2	6.6	7.9	-2.2	-1.7	-2.8
<b>EU-15</b>	7.1	6.4	7.8	-1.4	-0.9	-2.2
<b>BE</b>	7.5	6.7	8.5	0.9	1.4	0.2
<b>BG</b>	6.9	6.6	7.3	-9.5	-10.2	-8.6
<b>CZ</b>	5.4	4.3	6.8	-3.4	-3.1	-3.8
<b>DK</b>	3.8	3.5	4.2	-0.7	-0.5	-0.8
<b>DE</b>	8.7	8.7	8.8	0.7	1.0	0.5
<b>EE</b>	4.8	5.5	4.0	-8.6	-9.4	-7.7
<b>IE</b>	4.6	5.0	4.2	0.2	0.5	-0.1
<b>EL</b>	8.4	5.3	12.9	-3.1	-2.3	-4.4
<b>ES</b>	8.3	6.4	10.9	-5.6	-3.1	-9.5
<b>FR</b>	8.0	7.5	8.5	-2.3	-1.1	-3.7
<b>IT</b>	6.2	5.0	7.9	-4.8	-3.4	-7.0
<b>CY</b>	4.0	3.5	4.6	-1.1	0.2	-2.8
<b>LV</b>	6.1	6.6	5.7	-8.4	-8.7	-7.9
<b>LT</b>	4.4	4.4	4.4	-11.9	-14.1	-9.6
<b>LU</b>	4.1	3.6	4.7	1.7	1.8	1.5
<b>HU</b>	7.4	7.2	7.7	0.8	0.0	1.9
<b>MT</b>	6.5	6.0	7.6	0.1	-0.3	1.1
<b>NL</b>	3.2	2.8	3.7	0.5	0.6	0.2
<b>AT</b>	4.5	4.0	5.1	-0.2	-0.8	0.5
<b>PL</b>	9.7	9.1	10.4	-6.9	-5.7	-8.2
<b>PT</b>	8.5	7.0	10.1	4.5	3.8	5.1
<b>RO</b>	6.8	7.6	5.7	-0.9	-0.6	-1.4
<b>SI</b>	5.0	4.1	6.0	-2.1	-2.8	-1.2
<b>SK</b>	11.2	9.9	12.7	-7.9	-9.6	-5.9
<b>FI</b>	6.9	6.6	7.3	-4.3	-3.8	-4.7
<b>SE</b>	6.2	6.0	6.5	0.7	0.0	1.4
<b>UK</b>	5.4	5.7	5.0	-0.2	-0.5	0.1
<b>IS</b>	2.3	2.2	2.3	0.4	0.9	-0.2
<b>NO</b>	2.5	2.6	2.5	-1	-1	-0.8
<b>CH</b>	3.7	3	4.6	1	0.6	1.4

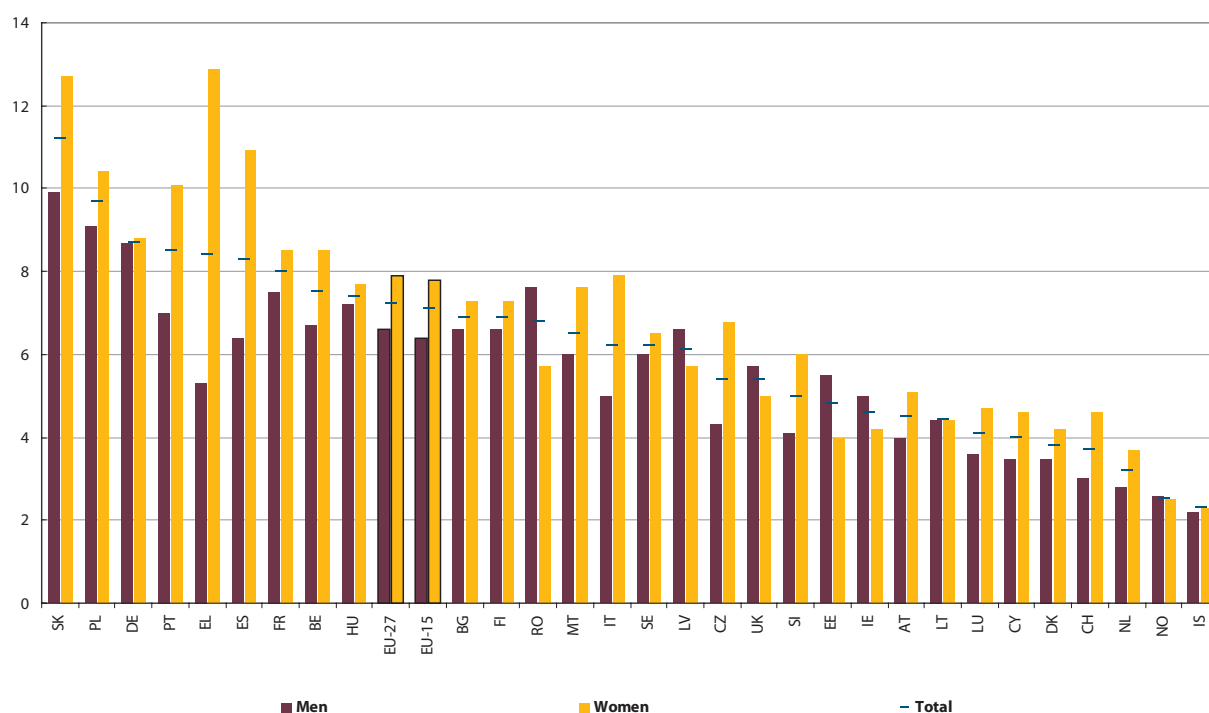
*Note:* Estonia: figure for women unreliable.*Source:* Eurostat, LFS

Although gender disparities in unemployment continued to decrease in the EU-27, discrepancies continued to remain noticeable. The gender gap was noteworthy in Greece, Spain, and, to a lesser degree, in Portugal and Italy (see Figure 1.5).

Whereas there was virtually no gender difference in Germany and Lithuania, the unemployment rate of women was lower than that of men in Romania, Latvia, Estonia, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

**Figure 1.5:** Unemployment rates for EU Member States, 2007

*Unemployed persons aged 15–64 as a percentage of the active population of the same age*



Note: Estonia: figure for women unreliable.

Source: Eurostat, LFS



## **The labour market for the 25 to 49-year olds**





## 2.1. Preliminary remarks

The following section concentrates on labour market characteristics of the working population aged 25 to 49. Considering that the average age for a woman for having a first child is 28 in almost all EU Member States<sup>(1)</sup>, reconciliation between work and private life is highly relevant for the population aged 25–49.

The lower age limit was chosen at that age 25 because most will have finished their education to focus on labour market participation. Hence, this section does not take account of young adults, many of whom are still likely to be in education, and persons over 50, who often have grown-up children or children that are old enough not to require supervision or continuous caring by a parent.

The presence of children, especially younger ones, can have a strong influence on the type of job sought, in particular among women. Flexible working time arrangements, part-time jobs or temporary work are examples of employment that persons with parental responsibilities may seek or be pushed into, often as a result of insufficient, inappropriate or unaffordable childcare provisions. Public policies regarding reconciliation between parenthood and labour market participation have sometimes developed in contradictory ways, combining measures encouraging parents to stay at home with those encouraging them to take up paid employment.

<sup>(1)</sup> Eurostat dataset (Population and social conditions indicators - Labour market - Employment and unemployment - LFS main indicators)  
[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=0,1136184,0\\_45572592&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136184,0_45572592&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

### 2.1.1. Employment rates

In 2006, 79.1% of Europeans aged 25 to 49 were in employment, which is 2 percentage points more than registered in 2000. The EU-27 employment rate for men stood at 86.8% and increased by a mere 0.3 percentage points over the same period. The overall increase was clearly driven by the 3.6 percentage point increase noted in the female employment rate, reaching 71.3% in 2006.

In 2006, at Member State level, the range between the lowest (79.6% – Bulgaria) and the highest (93.1% – Luxembourg) male employment rate was far narrower than that of women (from 41.0% in Malta to 83.6% in Slovenia).

Between 2000 and 2006, female employment rates increased in all but three Member States (Romania, Slovenia and

Slovakia). Strong increases were registered in a number of Mediterranean countries (Spain, Greece and Italy) and in certain new Member States (notably in Cyprus, Latvia and Estonia). It is likely that these increases are influenced by various family-friendly policies implemented by individual Member States, allowing parents to better reconcile work and family responsibilities.

Despite this general positive trend, women and men continue to encounter difficulties in reconciling their professional and private lives. Unequal divisions of domestic and family responsibilities remain very marked, a topic further developed in Chapter 3.



**Table 2.1:** Employment rates, 2006 and change 2000-2006*Employed persons aged 25-49 as a percentage of same age total population*

	Percentage			Change 2000-2006		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>EU-27</b>	79.1	86.8	71.3	2.0	0.3	3.6
<b>EU-15</b>	79.7	87.8	71.5	2.2	-0.1	4.4
<b>BE</b>	80.2	86.9	73.5	-0.8	-3.0	1.7
<b>BG</b>	76.5	79.6	73.3	6.0	6.6	5.2
<b>CZ</b>	82.4	91.3	73.1	0.6	1.1	0.0
<b>DK</b>	86.4	90.6	82.1	1.3	1.4	1.2
<b>DE</b>	80.1	85.5	74.5	-0.1	-2.5	2.3
<b>EE</b>	84.7	89.2	80.5	7.3	8.6	6.2
<b>IE</b>	79.5	89.2	69.5	2.4	0.2	4.3
<b>EL</b>	76.7	90.6	62.7	4.5	1.2	7.6
<b>ES</b>	77.2	88.0	65.9	7.3	1.7	12.5
<b>FR</b>	81.7	88.4	75.1	2.7	0.4	4.8
<b>IT</b>	74.0	87.3	60.5	4.6	1.7	7.5
<b>CY</b>	84.0	92.4	76.0	4.9	-0.4	10.0
<b>LV</b>	81.4	84.0	78.8	7.4	8.0	6.7
<b>LT</b>	82.8	85.0	80.7	6.7	9.6	4.0
<b>LU</b>	82.6	93.1	72.1	2.5	-0.9	6.5
<b>HU</b>	75.4	83.3	67.5	1.4	2.6	0.1
<b>MT</b>	66.7	91.4	41.0	3.6	1.2	5.4
<b>NL</b>	84.5	91.1	77.9	0.9	-2.2	4.2
<b>AT</b>	84.3	90.7	77.9	1.2	0.0	2.4
<b>PL</b>	74.4	80.7	68.1	1.6	1.0	2.2
<b>PT</b>	82.4	88.3	76.7	-1.0	-2.4	0.3
<b>RO</b>	76.4	81.9	70.7	-3.5	-3.8	-3.5
<b>SI</b>	86.3	88.9	83.6	0.7	2.2	-0.8
<b>SK</b>	77.7	85.1	70.1	2.6	5.3	-0.1
<b>FI</b>	82.8	86.4	79.0	1.4	0.9	1.9
<b>SE</b>	84.8	88.1	81.4	2.6	4.0	1.1
<b>UK</b>	81.4	88.5	74.6	0.4	-0.1	1.0
<b>IS</b>	88.0	93.4	82.3	-3.3	-2.6	-4.3
<b>NO</b>	84.7	88.0	81.3	-1.4	-1.7	-1.0
<b>CH</b>	85.5	93.3	77.7	-0.2	-1.9	1.8

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

## 2.1.2. Unemployment rates

In 2006, the overall EU-27 unemployment rate (for persons aged 15-64) stood at 8.3%; when focusing on persons aged between 25 and 49, the rate was close to one per cent lower (7.4% – see Table 2.2). The latter rate decreased by 1 percentage point between 2000 and 2006, noticeably influenced by the positive labour market evolution for women: hence, the female unemployment rate was reduced by 1.7 percentage points (to reach 8.3%) whereas that of men decreased by 0.5 percentage points (to reach 6.6% in 2006).

Unemployment rates dropped particularly fast in Lithuania (-10.6 percentage points between 2000 and 2006), but also in Estonia, Latvia and Bulgaria. Conversely, they were on the rise in nine Member States during this period, especially in Portugal, Germany and Luxembourg.

In 2006, unemployment rates among women remained in the double-digit range in Poland (13.8%), Slovakia (13.5%), Greece (13.2%) and Spain (10.8%); female unemployment rates were the lowest in Ireland (3.5%), the United Kingdom (4.0%) and Denmark (4.1%).

**Table 2.2:** Unemployment rates, 2006 and change 2000-2006

*Unemployed persons aged 25-49 as a percentage of same age active population*

	Percentage			Change 2000-2006		
				Percentage points		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>EU-27</b>	7.4	6.6	8.3	-1.0	-0.5	-1.7
<b>EU-15</b>	6.9	6.1	7.9	-0.6	0.0	-1.4
<b>BE</b>	7.4	6.7	8.2	1.5	2.0	0.7
<b>BG</b>	8.0	7.6	8.3	-6.7	-7.2	-6.3
<b>CZ</b>	6.3	4.6	8.4	-1.8	-1.4	-2.2
<b>DK</b>	3.2	2.4	4.1	-1.0	-1.1	-0.9
<b>DE</b>	9.3	9.4	9.1	2.4	2.8	1.9
<b>EE</b>	5.6	5.5 u	5.7 u	-7.1	-8.2	-5.9
<b>IE</b>	3.9	4.1	3.5	-0.2	-0.2	-0.2
<b>EL</b>	8.6	5.3	13.2	-1.7	-1.2	-2.7
<b>ES</b>	7.8	5.6	10.8	-4.9	-2.5	-8.6
<b>FR</b>	7.8	6.9	8.9	-1.8	-0.7	-3.0
<b>IT</b>	6.3	4.8	8.4	-3.1	-2.1	-4.8
<b>CY</b>	4.1	3.4	4.9	-0.6	0.3	-1.9
<b>LV</b>	6.1	6.9	5.3	-7.9	-7.9	-8.0
<b>LT</b>	4.8	4.9 u	4.8 u	-10.6	-12.4	-8.6
<b>LU</b>	4.3	3.0	6.0	2.3	1.6	3.0
<b>HU</b>	7.1	6.6	7.7	1.0	0.0	2.1
<b>MT</b>	5.2	4.4 u	7.0 u	0.1	-0.8	:
<b>NL</b>	3.8	3.4	4.3	1.5	1.6	1.4
<b>AT</b>	4.2	3.6	5.0	0.2	-0.3	0.9
<b>PL</b>	12.4	11.2	13.8	-2.4	-1.4	-3.5
<b>PT</b>	7.4	5.8	9.2	4.0	3.2	4.9
<b>RO</b>	6.7	7.6	5.6	-0.5	0.3	-1.6
<b>SI</b>	5.5	4.4	6.8	-0.1	-1.0	1.1
<b>SK</b>	11.9	10.5	13.5	-4.4	-5.4	-3.2
<b>FI</b>	6.1	5.5	6.8	-2.1	-1.6	-2.5
<b>SE</b>	5.5	5.3	5.8	0.5	0.4	0.7
<b>UK</b>	4.1	4.2	4.0	-0.4	-0.6	-0.2
<b>IS</b>	1.8	:	:	0.3	:	:
<b>NO</b>	3.1	3.2	2.9	0.5	0.5	0.6
<b>CH</b>	3.6	2.7	4.7	1.2	1.0	1.3

Notes: u: unreliable or uncertain data due to small sample size. ': missing data.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.



### 2.1.3. Part-time work

There has been an increase in the proportion of part-time employment<sup>(2)</sup> between 2000 and 2006, both in the European Union as a whole (by almost 2 percentage points) and in the various Member States, for men and women alike. This trend can essentially be attributed to various factors, including:

- the structural effect of an increasing number of women in the labour market, of which a relatively high proportion opt for part-time employment;
- the various possibilities for a more flexible work organisation (further detailed in Chapter 6).

Whether or not part-time work facilitates the balance between work and private life depends first and foremost on working hours. Working only in the morning when children are at school certainly constitutes a viable option for many women. However, certain part-time jobs, especially for women, may be associated with atypical hours early in the morning or late at night (cleaning sector, retail trade) and are therefore an obstacle to reconciliation, unless these working patterns are specifically sought (in the case of 'shift parenting' for example).

The compatibility of part-time work with life outside work further depends on the institutional conditions, such as prevalent wages and salaries, social protection benefits and career prospects, and determines whether it is an attractive, or even viable alternative to standard full-time work. The choice workers make will have consequences on their pension rights or might lead to incomes being below the thresholds of some basic welfare benefits.

At EU level, 4.7% of employed men aged 25–49 were working part-time in 2006, while this share amounted to 3.9% in 2000 (+0.8 percentage points). The order of magnitude is

completely different for women: 29.4% of all employed women had part-time occupations in 2006, against 27.6% in 2000 (+1.8 percentage points).

Unsurprisingly, the rate of part-time employment among women is considerably higher than the corresponding rate for men, revealing the predominantly female nature of part-time work in Europe. The differences in female participation across individual Member States may be ascribed to a multitude of factors, such as varying levels of education, existing family policies and, last but not least, culture.

The shares of part-time employment in total employment are generally higher in countries of northern Europe and lower in southern and new Member States. This structural difference may be attributed to the lower rates of female labour market participation in southern countries and, in the Eastern European Member States, the limited availability of part-time jobs due to labour market rigidity and lower wage levels, making part-time work less attractive<sup>(3)</sup>.

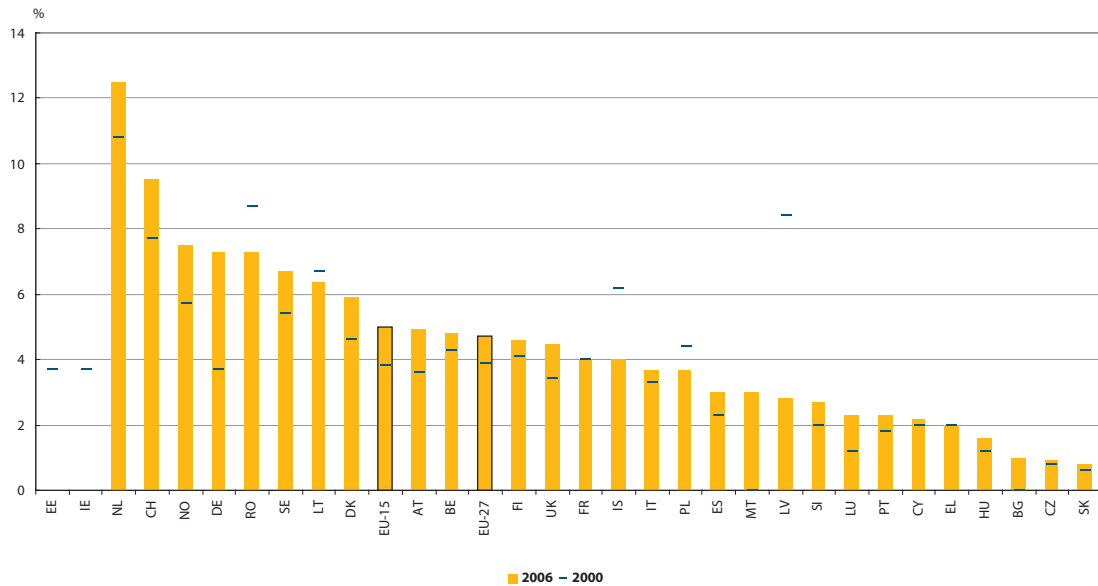
The share of part-time employment has increased in most Member States. The two graphs contained in Figure 2.1 may look similar in appearance but the scaling reveals the gender difference quite clearly: among men, the largest shares of part-timers were found in the Netherlands (12.5% of all employed men aged between 25 and 49), followed some way behind by Germany, Romania (both countries at 7.3%) and Sweden (6.7%). At the other end of the scale, the Czech Republic and Slovakia registered shares of under one per cent. Compared to 2000, the share of part-time employment was noticeably reduced in Romania, Poland and especially Latvia. Obviously, in these countries, the employment gains in recent years have primarily bolstered full-time jobs.

<sup>(2)</sup> Eurostat dataset (Population and social conditions indicators - Labour market Employment and unemployment - LFS main indicators)  
[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=0,1136184,0\\_45572592&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=0,1136184,0_45572592&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

<sup>(3)</sup> See Report from the Commission to the Council, the European parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on equality between women and men, 2005 – COM (2005) 44 final – Brussels 14.2.2005

**Figure 2.1.a:** Part-time employment of men, 2000 and 2006

Part-time employees aged 25-49 as a percentage of total employees in the same age group



Notes:

EE, BE, SI, LU, HU and SK: unreliable or uncertain data for 2000 due to small sample size.

MT, SI and BG: unreliable or uncertain data for 2006 due to small sample size.

MT (2000) and EE (2006): data unavailable.

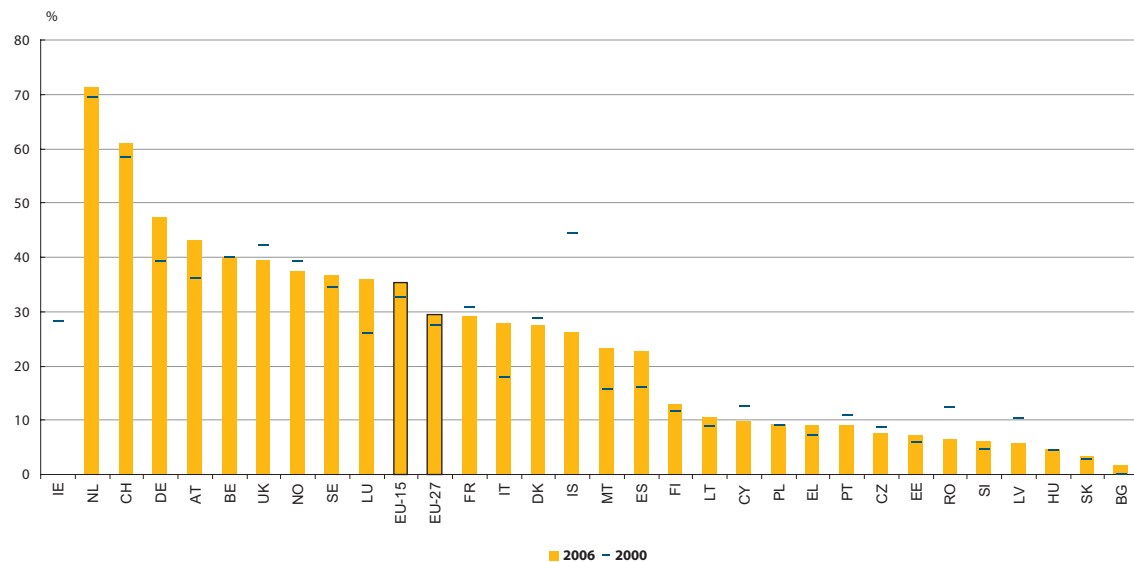
BG (2000) and IE (2006): unreliable or uncertain data not shown due to small sample size.

It should be noted that year-on-year evolution for Latvia and Iceland is more regular than suggested by the difference compared to 2000.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

**Figure 2.1.b:** Part-time employment of women, 2000 and 2006

Part-time employees aged 25-49 as a percentage of total employees in the same age group



Notes:

BE (2000) and EE (2006): unreliable or uncertain data due to small sample size.

BG (2000) and IE (2006): unreliable or uncertain data not shown due to small sample size.

It should be noted that year-on-year evolution for Latvia and Iceland is more regular than suggested by the difference compared to 2000.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

The incidence of part-time work among women is of a different order of magnitude: the Netherlands was again at the top of the chart, with close to three quarters (71.5%) of all employed women between the ages of 25 and 49 in part-time occupations (see Chapter 6). Germany, Austria and Belgium followed some way behind, with shares ranging between 40% and 50%. Many new Member States registered low shares in female part-time employment, generally well under 10%. Part-time employment progressed particularly fast in Germany, Italy and Luxembourg (between 8 and 10 percentage points) whereas it dropped in Iceland.

### Reasons for part-time occupation

Working part-time can either be a choice or a constraint: in many cases, part-time work will be voluntary and individuals will opt for it for a large variety of reasons. Working part-time can however also be linked to the fact that certain elements preclude working full-time. The main reasons evoked for working part-time within the EU-27 are shown in Figure 2.2, along with their respective importance.

In the EU, most women state that they are working part-time because they have difficulties balancing work and responsibilities in private life. The prevalence of part-time employment among women is closely linked to the unequal distribution of the caring responsibilities between men and women. Indeed, when considering 'looking after children' and

'other family or personal reasons' together, the share for men amounted to 13.9%, whereas for women it was 61.1%. The difference was particularly strong for the motivation 'looking after children' (mentioned by 8.0% of men and 42.1% of women).

Among men, education seems to be a major reason for taking up part-time employment: 16.0% of men appeared to combine part-time work with education, whereas this was the case for only 2.8% of women.

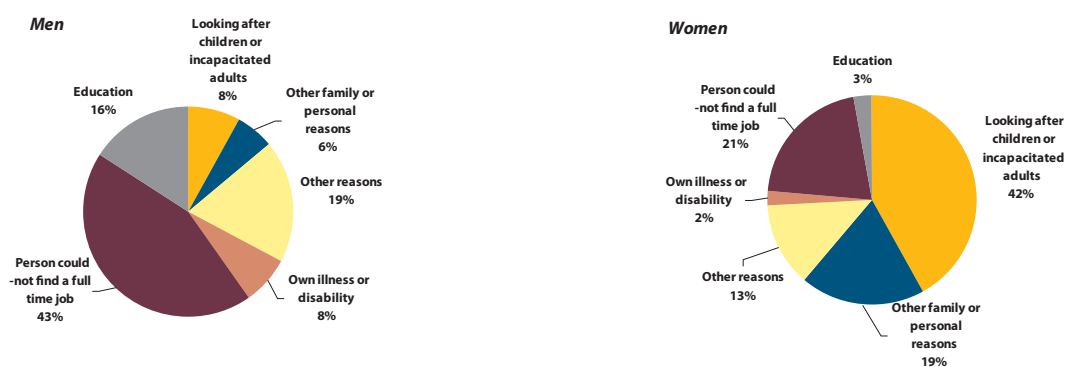
'Person could not find a full-time job' is an important category of 'involuntary part-time employment' but it should not be considered as the only one. It could indeed also apply to persons who answered 'looking after children' or 'other family or personal reasons', especially when no suitable care services are available.

Figure 2.2 shows that 43% of male part-time workers stated their situation was due to the fact that they could not find full-time employment. Considering their higher implication in caring responsibilities, a lower share can be expected among women, which is indeed confirmed, but it was nonetheless mentioned by one fifth of female respondents (20.8%).

Finally, a fairly large proportion mentioned 'other reasons' for having a part-time occupation (18.9% of men and 13.2% of women)<sup>(4)</sup>.

**Figure 2.2:** Main reasons behind part-time employment in the EU-27, 2006

*Persons employed part-time aged 25-49*



Source: Eurostat, LFS.

Turning away from the situation at EU-27 level, Table 2.3 details the reasons for part-time work in the individual Member States<sup>(5)</sup>.

The other column groups of Table 2.3 are sub-categories of the total. Although certain figures are uncertain due to small

sample sizes, it can be stated that part-time employment combined with education is relatively widespread in Denmark. Also, a fairly large proportion of part-timers in Germany, France, Italy and Sweden, especially women, declared that they could not find full-time employment.

<sup>(4)</sup> Although the 2006 survey question did not ask further details on 'other reasons', the results of earlier surveys suggest that many who declared 'other reasons' are in fact persons who did not want a full-time job

<sup>(5)</sup> The last column group of Table 2.5 reflects the share of part-time workers as a share of all persons employed. There is a discrepancy with the figures in Figure 2.3, which apply to 'employees' only.

It is not clear whether part-timers would prefer to work full-time if childcare services were more extensive or if full-time working hours were organised to be more family-friendly: 'looking after children' was a reason often cited by women in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, but this could either be due to insufficient child care facilities or to a

deliberate choice of the mothers. Finally, 'other family reasons' were mentioned fairly often by women in Belgium and Germany. In the future, more details on these aspects may become available, as data is expected from a specific module called 'Reconciliation between work and private life', which is to be appended to the European Labour Force Survey of 2010.

**Table 2.3:** Main reason for part-time employment, 2006 (%)

*Persons employed part-time as a share of total persons employed, age group 25-49*

	Education			Own illness			Looking after children			Other family reasons			Could not find a full-time job			Other reasons			Total part-time employees		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>EU-27</b>	0.6	(0.4)	0.7	0.4	(0.2)	0.5	4.8	(0.2)	10.3	2.2	(0.2)	4.7	3.2	(1.3)	5.0	2.0	(0.6)	3.5	13.2	2.9	24.7
<b>BE</b>	0.2	:	(0.3)	0.5	(0.2)	0.8	4.2	0.3	8.8	6.8	0.9	13.6	3.0	1.3	4.9	5.7	1.7	10.3	20.5	4.5	38.6
<b>BG</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	0.5	(0.3)	(0.7)	:	:	:	0.6	0.3	0.9
<b>CZ</b>	0.2	(0.1)	0.2	0.5	0.3	0.6	1.0	:	2.2	0.3	:	0.6	0.6	(0.1)	1.2	0.4	(0.1)	0.7	3.0	0.7	5.7
<b>DK</b>	2.6	2.0	3.0	1.4	0.8	2.0	1.8	:	3.7	:	:	:	2.8	0.9	4.9	5.6	1.0	10.7	14.2	4.8	24.2
<b>DE</b>	1.3	(1.2)	1.4	0.4	(0.3)	0.5	5.4	(0.2)	11.3	8.3	(0.4)	17.3	5.1	(2.4)	7.9	2.3	(0.7)	4.0	22.7	5.2	42.4
<b>EE</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	(1.8)	:	:	4.4	1.8	6.9
<b>IE</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
<b>EL</b>	(0.1)	:	:	0.1	(0.1)	(0.2)	0.4	:	0.9	0.1	:	(0.2)	1.2	0.5	2.1	0.5	0.2	0.9	2.3	0.8	4.3
<b>ES</b>	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.1	1.1	0.0	2.5	0.7	(0.0)	1.7	1.9	0.4	3.8	1.4	0.3	2.7	5.5	1.0	11.1
<b>FR</b>	0.1	:	(0.2)	0.5	(0.3)	0.7	6.5	(0.3)	13.3	1.3	(0.2)	2.6	4.1	(1.5)	6.8	0.8	(0.3)	1.4	13.3	2.6	24.8
<b>IT</b>	0.4	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.3	4.2	0.1	10.1	0.8	0.1	1.8	4.5	1.5	8.0	1.7	0.5	3.1	11.7	2.4	23.8
<b>CY</b>	:	:	:	(0.1)	:	:	0.9	:	1.9	0.8	:	1.5	1.4	1.0	1.9	(0.2)	:	(0.3)	3.6	1.5	5.7
<b>LV</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	1.0	(0.5)	(1.2)	0.5	:	(1.0)	2.1	0.8	3.3
<b>LT</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	(0.7)	:	(1.3)	1.8	(1.1)	(2.2)	1.9	(1.0)	(2.7)	5.0	2.6	7.2
<b>LU</b>	:	:	:	(0.4)	:	:	6.2	:	13.9	4.7	:	10.1	1.6	:	3.2	3.2	(0.6)	6.3	16.2	1.7	34.3
<b>HU</b>	(0.1)	:	:	0.5	0.3	0.7	0.3	:	0.7	:	:	:	0.8	0.4	1.2	0.6	(0.2)	1.0	2.4	1.2	3.8
<b>MT</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	3.2	:	9.5	(1.5)	:	:	(2.0)	:	:	8.3	2.7	19.6
<b>NL</b>	(1.6)	(1.3)	1.9	(1.4)	(0.8)	2.1	(20.8)	(2.9)	40.4	(2.1)	:	4.3	(2.2)	(1.5)	3.1	(7.0)	(3.5)	11.2	35.1	10.1	63.0
<b>AT</b>	1.4	1.1	1.6	0.4	:	(0.6)	10.6	:	22.6	3.2	0.6	6.1	2.4	0.9	4.1	4.6	1.4	8.1	22.6	4.4	43.1
<b>PL</b>	(0.0)	(0.0)	:	0.1	0.1	(0.2)	0.2	:	0.6	(0.1)	:	(0.1)	0.9	0.5	1.4	0.9	0.4	1.4	2.3	1.0	3.8
<b>PT</b>	:	:	:	0.1	:	:	0.2	:	0.4	0.3	:	0.7	0.8	0.2	1.6	0.3	0.1	0.4	1.8	0.4	3.3
<b>RO</b>	:	:	:	(0.0)	:	:	0.0	:	0.1	0.0	:	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.7
<b>SI</b>	(0.3)	(0.2)	(0.4)	(0.7)	(0.3)	(0.9)	(0.2)	:	(0.5)	:	:	:	(0.3)	:	(0.5)	(0.9)	(0.5)	(1.3)	2.4	1.1	3.6
<b>SK</b>	:	:	:	0.3	:	(0.4)	(0.2)	:	(0.3)	:	:	:	0.3	:	(0.5)	0.8	(0.2)	1.4	1.6	0.6	2.8
<b>FI</b>	1.0	0.7	1.3	0.2	:	(0.4)	1.2	:	2.5	0.6	0.4	0.9	2.4	1.1	3.6	0.4	0.3	0.5	5.9	2.7	9.2
<b>SE</b>	1.1	0.7	1.4	1.6	0.7	2.4	6.1	0.6	12.0	1.8	0.3	3.4	4.5	1.5	7.6	2.3	0.9	3.6	17.4	4.6	30.5
<b>UK</b>	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.3	0.6	12.3	0.6	24.9	1.6	0.2	3.1	1.7	1.0	2.2	2.4	0.6	4.2	19.3	3.3	35.8

Notes: '-' Data not available or extremely unreliable due to small sample size.

() Indicates figure is uncertain due to small sample size.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

## 2.1.4. Fixed-term contracts

Employment under fixed-term contracts comprises work where, in contrast to permanent work, there is an end date. It often entails a different set of legal obligations on behalf of employers and certain aspects of employment protection legislation do not apply to fixed-term contracts. Indeed, employment protection regarding employee dismissal from permanent contracts may act as a disincentive for employers to hire permanent staff. This contributes to a relatively high incidence of fixed-term employment in certain Member States.

In 2006, around 14.5 million workers aged 25-49 in the EU-27 worked under fixed-term employment contracts, accounting for 12.1% of the total number of employees. Over the period 2000-2006, the proportion slightly increased both in the European Union as a whole and in most Member States for both men and women. Poland registered a particularly strong increase in fixed-term employment, with close to 20 percentage points (Table 2.4).



The incidence of fixed-term employment varied considerably across countries, generally affecting women slightly more than men (except in some new Member States). The highest overall shares in 2006 were recorded in Spain (31.9%) and Poland (24.1%) which may be correlated with the high unemployment rate in these countries (12.4% in Poland and 7.8% in Spain). Indeed, persons who cannot find permanent employment will more readily accept a fixed-term job, hoping that it will sooner or later lead to a permanent contract. In the case of Spain, fixed-term contracts were introduced by the Spanish government in 1984 (Reform of the workers' status) in order to facilitate job creation, reduce unemployment and support the integration of young people. Strict regulations on

permanent employment, reduced redundancy costs and wage differentiation may also have played a prominent role in the rise of this type of work.

Fixed-term jobs constituted 10% to 20% of all jobs in Greece, Portugal, Finland, Cyprus, Sweden, Slovenia, Italy, the Netherlands and France. Conversely, this share amounted to only around 1.5% in Ireland and Romania.

Compared to 2000, the proportion of persons with fixed-term working contracts in the individual countries did not change significantly, with the notable exception of Poland, where it increased by an impressive 20 percentage points, equally affecting men and women.

**Table 2.4:** Fixed-term working contracts, 2006 and change 2000-2006

*Fixed-term employees aged 25-49 as a percentage of the total number of employees of the same age*

				Change 2000-2006		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>EU-27</b>	12.1	11.2	13.0	2.4	2.3	2.4
<b>EU-15</b>	12.3	11.1	13.5	1.3	1.2	1.2
<b>BE</b>	7.2	5.2	9.4	0.2	0.6	-0.5
<b>BG</b>	5.4	5.4	5.3	:	:	:
<b>CZ</b>	6.1	5.0	7.4	0.9	0.4	1.5
<b>DK</b>	7.2	5.3	9.2	0.3	1.0	-0.5
<b>DE</b>	9.3	8.9	9.8	1.3	1.4	1.3
<b>EE</b>	2.3 u	:	:	0.4	:	:
<b>IE</b>	1.6	1.4	1.8	-1.4	-0.8	-2.1
<b>EL</b>	10.2	8.6	12.2	-2.2	-2.7	-1.9
<b>ES</b>	31.9	29.9	34.4	2.6	1.7	3.5
<b>FR</b>	11.4	10.2	12.7	-1.3	-1.0	-1.7
<b>IT</b>	12.0	9.6	15.3	2.9	1.9	4.1
<b>CY</b>	14.3	7.9	20.8	3.7	0.9	6.1
<b>LV</b>	6.4	8.1	4.7	-0.1	-0.7	0.5
<b>LT</b>	3.9	6.0 u	1.9 u	0.2	0.9	-0.6
<b>LU</b>	4.6	4.2	5.1	2.1	2.5	1.4
<b>HU</b>	6.3	6.6	6.0	0.2	0.0	0.5
<b>MT</b>	2.9 u	:	:	0.4	:	:
<b>NL</b>	11.6	10.5	12.8	1.4	2.6	-0.3
<b>AT</b>	4.7	4.1	5.3	0.6	0.9	0.2
<b>PL</b>	24.1	25.3	22.7	19.7	19.9	19.5
<b>PT</b>	18.9	17.8	20.1	1.6	2.6	0.5
<b>RO</b>	1.7	1.9	1.4	-0.4	-0.3	-0.6
<b>SI</b>	13.1	11.2	15.1	3.6	2.4	4.9
<b>SK</b>	3.6	3.8	3.4	0.6	0.7	0.5
<b>FI</b>	14.6	9.8	19.7	0.1	-0.7	1.0
<b>SE</b>	13.9	11.7	16.1	1.1	1.4	0.9
<b>UK</b>	4.3	3.5	5.2	-1.1	-0.5	-1.7
<b>IS</b>	8.8	7.2	10.5	5.0	4.3	5.8
<b>NO</b>	9.1	5.6	12.8	1.5	0.7	2.3
<b>CH</b>	6.9	6.0	8.0	1.4	1.9	0.9

Notes: u : unreliable or uncertain data due to small sample size.

It should be noted that annual growth rates for Poland are fairly regular.

Change 2000-2006: percentage points.

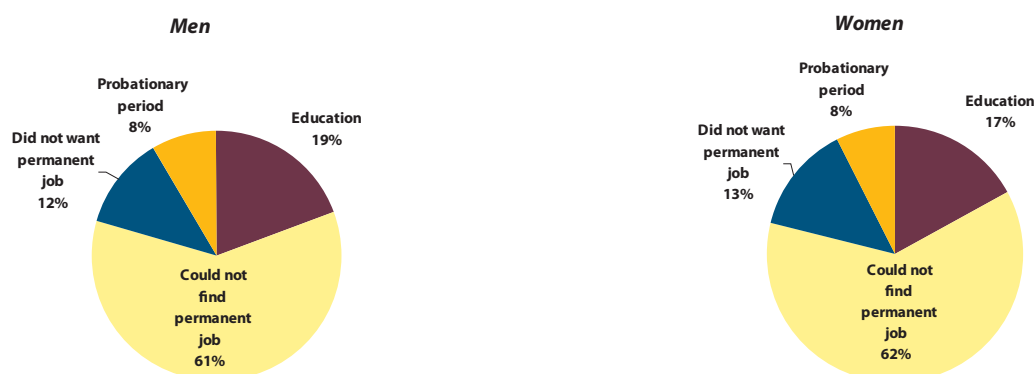
Source: Eurostat, LFS.

When asked about the reasons for working under a fixed-term contract, a significant number of respondents answered that they were unable to find a permanent job. At EU-27 level, this was the case for 61.9% of women and 60.2% of men (see Figure 2.3). Bearing in mind that data are uncertain due to the small sample size, 'education' was often mentioned to

motivate fixed-term employment (in around 18% of cases). Indeed, tertiary education and fixed-term employment can often be combined. Whereas 8% of respondents answered that fixed-term employment preceded permanent employment (when a fixed-term contract acts as a probation period), 13% indicated that permanent employment was not wanted.

**Figure 2.3:** Main reasons behind temporary employment in the EU-27, 2006

*Persons in fixed-term employment aged 25-49*



Note: Data are uncertain due to low sample size for all the reasons cited.

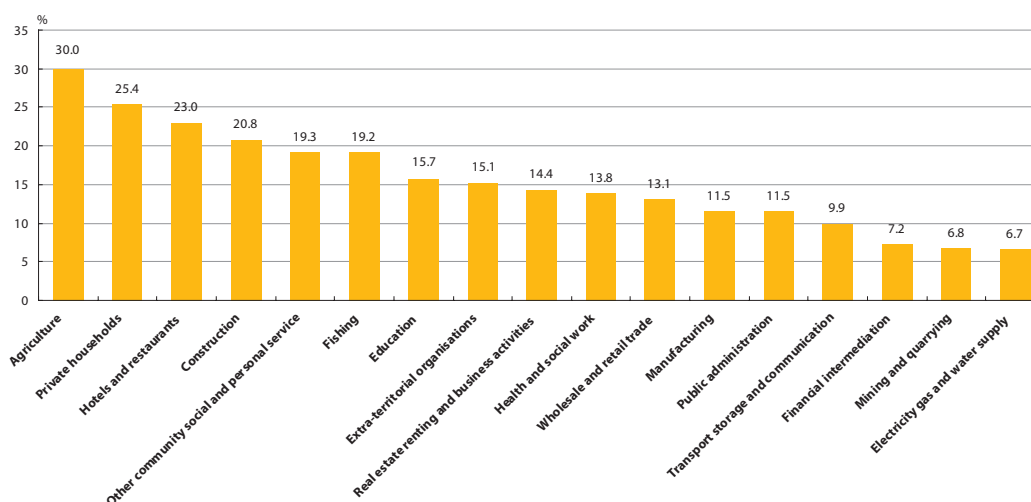
Source: Eurostat, LFS.

Figure 2.4 outlines that fixed-term employment is particularly widespread in sectors that experience seasonal activity fluctuations, such as agriculture, hotels and restaurants as well as construction. The fact that private households score high is certainly influenced by jobs in household maintenance or gardening.

Activities such as education, business services, trade and manufacturing generally display fixed-term job shares between 10% and 15%, allowing employers to cover workload needs during temporary absences of permanent staff (such as maternity/paternity leave) or periods of high activity.

**Figure 2.4:** Fixed-term employees by economic activity in the EU-27, 2006

*Percentage of employees in fixed-term employment in age group 25-49*



Source: Eurostat, LFS.



## 2.2. Employment status by type of household and impact of parenthood

The following section sheds light on the employment pattern of individuals taking into account the type of household in which they live, and notably how these individuals organise their working life when they have caring responsibilities.

Children affect employment opportunities and choices: the need to provide care for the child and the additional domestic responsibilities have a financial impact and raise the opportunity costs of working. While school entry (generally at age 5 or 6) presents a substantial sudden change in circumstances through the provision of what is effectively free (and compulsory) childcare, which may enhance employment

opportunities for mothers, it also comes with additional parental demands associated with school life and the complexities of organising care around normal school hours. And this affects both genders.

The decision to work or keep working when having the responsibility for children is indeed a decision taken jointly with the partner, rather than individually. Many factors influence this decision process: financial needs of the household, opportunities for childcare, cultural aspects and personal preferences and, as the overall framework, the composition of the household concerned.

### 2.2.1. Household structure

The presence of children in a household has an impact on the employment pattern of the members in the household. Some persons work more to cover the increased expenses and others work less to have more time for caring. Here, the three main models should be recalled: the traditional breadwinner model – where the man is employed full-time, and the woman is in charge of caring for children and elderly; the modified breadwinner model – here the man is also working full-time and the woman is engaged in part-time paid work and is mainly responsible for the care work, assisted by partial provisions of care services or educational services; the egalitarian model – in this model both partners work full-time, but women are still responsible for the caring<sup>(6)</sup>.

In the case of southern European countries, the persistence of the traditional breadwinner model may be explained by the limited possibilities women have to work part-time due to the relative rigidity in the labour market, the more limited work and family compatibility policies developed by the welfare states, as well as the family dependence and solidarity that characterise family relations in these countries.

The last decades have witnessed different forms of partnership, resulting in a variety of household types. This section takes a closer look at the employment pattern of individuals according to the type of household they are living in.

Individuals in three types of households will be considered in detail:

- Singles' households (with and without children)
- Couples' households (with and without children)
- Other types of households (with and without children)<sup>(7)</sup>

With respect to the definition of children, the LFS follows an approach which is mainly based on their age and economic activity. In the context of the household data, children are defined as persons who are either less than 15 years old, or who are aged 15–24, who live with their parents and are economically inactive. All other persons are considered as adults. The distinction between adults and children must be clear in order to make a relevant classification of the various types of households, depending on their composition.

Figure 2.5 offers an overview of persons aged 25–49 and the type of household they live in that were surveyed in the European Labour Force Survey. For several Member States, the household type 'couple with children' was the largest category, albeit at various degrees. Indeed, while persons living as couples with children comprised the absolute majority only in France, Cyprus and Luxembourg (with 50%) and accounted for high shares in the Czech Republic, Malta, the Netherlands and Finland (close to 50%), they accounted for well under 40% in Bulgaria, Germany, Lithuania, Austria and Slovakia, and represented only slightly more than one third of the population aged 25–49 in Latvia (35%).

<sup>(6)</sup> See also: Haas, B. (2005): The Work-care Balance: Is it possible to identify typologies for cross-national comparisons? – Current Sociology, Vol 53, No. 3, 487–508

<sup>(7)</sup> Consisting of multi-generation households.

Persons living in 'couples without children' were relatively numerous in Finland and the Netherlands (22% and 21% respectively) but also in Germany, France, Luxembourg and the UK (between 16% and 17%). Conversely, persons within such households represented only around 5% in Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia. Persons of the type 'other without children' constitute around one quarter of the total in Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia. These are also the countries where the share of one-person households (single without children) is generally very low, quite the opposite of Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, Austria and Finland, where shares between 15% and 20% were registered.

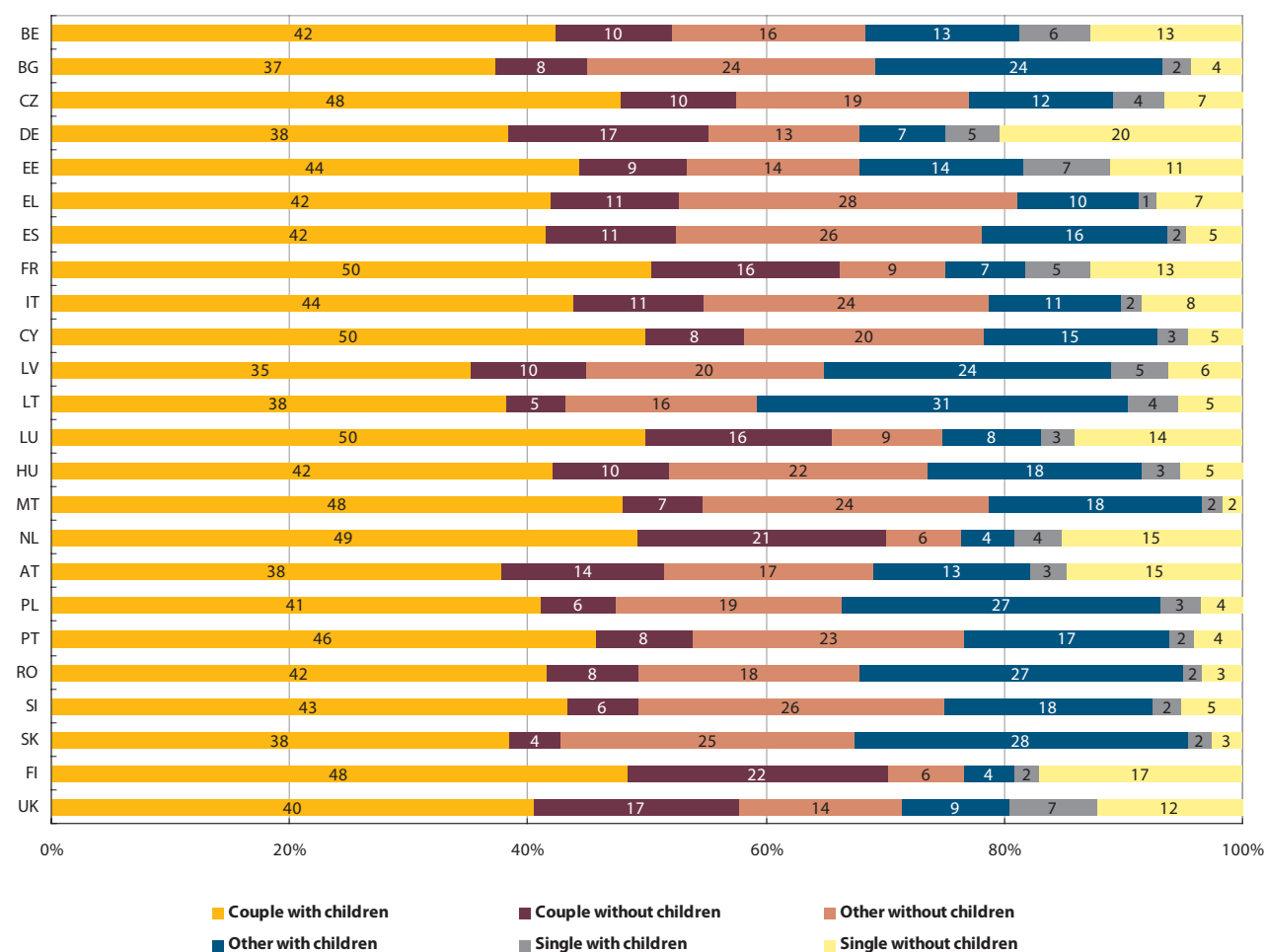
Countries with comparatively few persons living as a 'couple with children' often displayed relatively high shares of persons

living in 'other types of household with children', which include families extending over three generations. This was observed in many Eastern European Member States such as Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

In the EU-27, single-parents with children generally accounted for less than 5% of the surveyed persons, with the exception of Belgium (6%), France (5%), Estonia (7%) and the United Kingdom (7%). The lowest share was reported by Greece (1%).

Finally, single persons were most frequently observed in Germany (20%) and Finland (17%). Conversely, they accounted for very low shares in Romania, Slovakia and especially Malta.

**Figure 2.5:** Persons aged 25–49 by type of household they are living in, 2006



Notes: The analysis is based on a specific LFS database allowing household composition breakdowns. This database does not contain information on DK and SE. – IE: no data available.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.



### 2.2.2. Employment status according to the household type

Having considered the prevalence of household types in which persons aged 25-49 are living, it is now appropriate to investigate the employment status of these adults. Many factors can have an impact on the choice of a household's employment pattern, such as:

- Insufficient full-time wages

In countries where the average full-time wages are insufficient to cover a family's minimum cost of living, a dual full-time earner pattern will be encountered more often.

- Flexibility of working-time arrangements

Flexible working-time arrangements and in particular the possibility to work part-time help women and men to reconcile work and private life. Nevertheless, part-time work can remain uncommon in countries where employers are reluctant to provide such arrangements.

- Gender cultural context

In certain countries, especially those of Southern Europe, but also Germany and Austria, a more conservative family model persists.

- Unemployment

Family policy, societal ideals concerning the gender division of labour as well as economic incentives that encourage women and men to work full-time may often be undermined in practice by a lack of employment opportunities.

- Social and family policies

Provision of extensive, affordable child care facilities and generous support for parental leave would foster a dual full-time earner model by stimulating female labour market participation. Also, paid parental leave is likely to boost female participation, although extended parental leave may weaken labour market skills and damage future career paths and earnings, making it difficult or less interesting for mothers to return to the labour market.

Many of these factors are interrelated. Despite the fact that women often continue to take the bulk of the child care responsibilities, most of them enter the labour force for economic reasons, as an increasing number of families can only reach an acceptable standard of living when both parents generate an income. Consequently, the presence of children will have little effect on the employment rates.

Also, in countries with the most family-friendly labour policies, one could expect that the presence of children should have less of a negative effect on female labour market involvement and that the proportion of 'dual-earner families' would rise. But this works only if there is no mismatch between the family-friendly policy and the availability of appropriate caring facilities. When childcare provisions are

insufficient; labour market participation will still depend on whether children are present or not.

The mainstream model for households with children features men working full-time and women working part-time, or, when part-time work opportunities are scarce, men full-time and women not at all. When reconciliation is persistently difficult, women either adjust their working pattern, postpone the family formation process or refrain from having children altogether.

The objective of the following analysis is to have a more detailed view on the working status of persons (working full time, working part-time or not working) given the type of household in which they live and taking into account the presence of children. The discussion is starting with the analysis of singles followed by the description of couples.

#### Employment pattern of singles

Turning to employment patterns for singles and single parents, Figure 2.6 outlines that single persons without children (lower bar of the respective countries) were predominantly employed full-time, but at varying degrees. Shares of over 80% were registered in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Hungary and Portugal. But in the Netherlands, which offers part-time employment in a wide range of economic sectors, this proportion amounted to only 62%. In Belgium, Bulgaria, Poland, Slovenia and Finland, more than 20% of singles without children were unemployed or inactive.

In all Member States single parents tend to work. Working full-time is fairly widespread in Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland (with shares above 70%). In Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria and the United Kingdom more than 30% of single parents work part-time. More than 30% of single parents were unemployed in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom.

When compared with the respective country's upper bar (singles with children), it becomes evident that the proportion of singles employed full-time decreases significantly concurrently with childrearing, notably in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands (down by 45 and 42 percentage points respectively), but also in Germany, Luxembourg and Austria, where many seem to turn to part-time employment. Conversely, children have little or no effect on full-time employment in Bulgaria, Romania, the three Baltic States and Finland, confirming for Finland the efficiency of institutional childcare facilities. The institutional environment may also influence the shares of part-time occupations, which are low in childless households and remain relatively low in the presence of children.

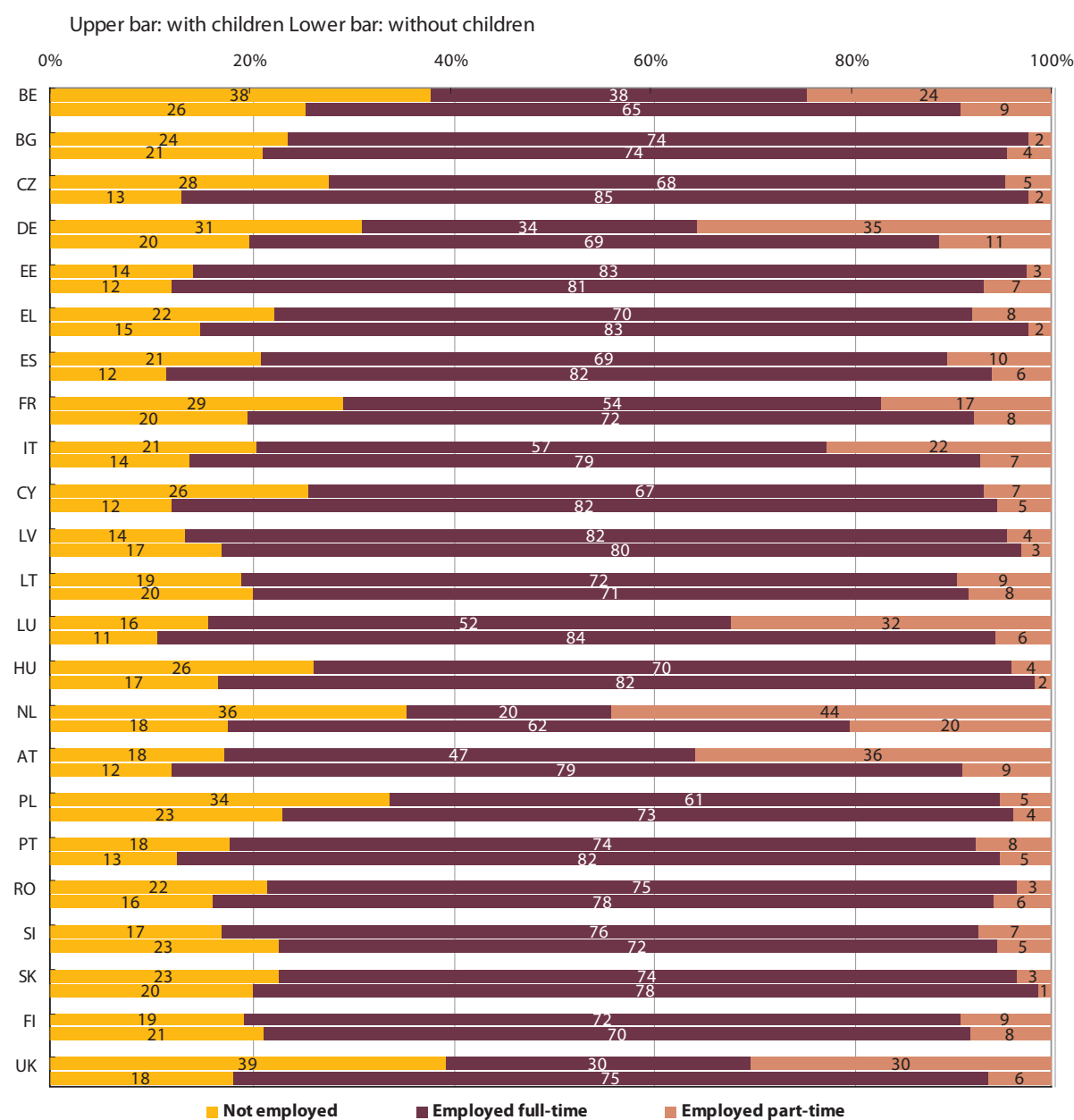
In Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia and Finland, the share of singles in full-time employment actually increases in the presence of children, which is probably linked to increased financial needs, but is only possible with adequate childcare arrangements.

The proportion of singles who withdraw (or are pushed to

withdraw) from a paid job when children enter the household is far from negligible in countries such as Belgium, the Czech Republic, Germany, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Poland and the United Kingdom. Taking up a job when children are born into the household is far less frequent, but remains noticeable in Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, and Finland.

**Figure 2.6:** Employment status of persons in singles' households, 2006

*Age group 25-49, in relation to the presence of children in the household*



Notes: Analysis based on a specific LFS database allowing household composition breakdowns. This database does not contain information on DK and SE. – IE: no data available – MT: unreliable data due to small sample size

Source: Eurostat, LFS.



### Employment pattern of couples

With respect to the employment status of persons living as couples more combinations arise. Figure 2.7 presents the most relevant patterns taking account of the presence of children in the household.

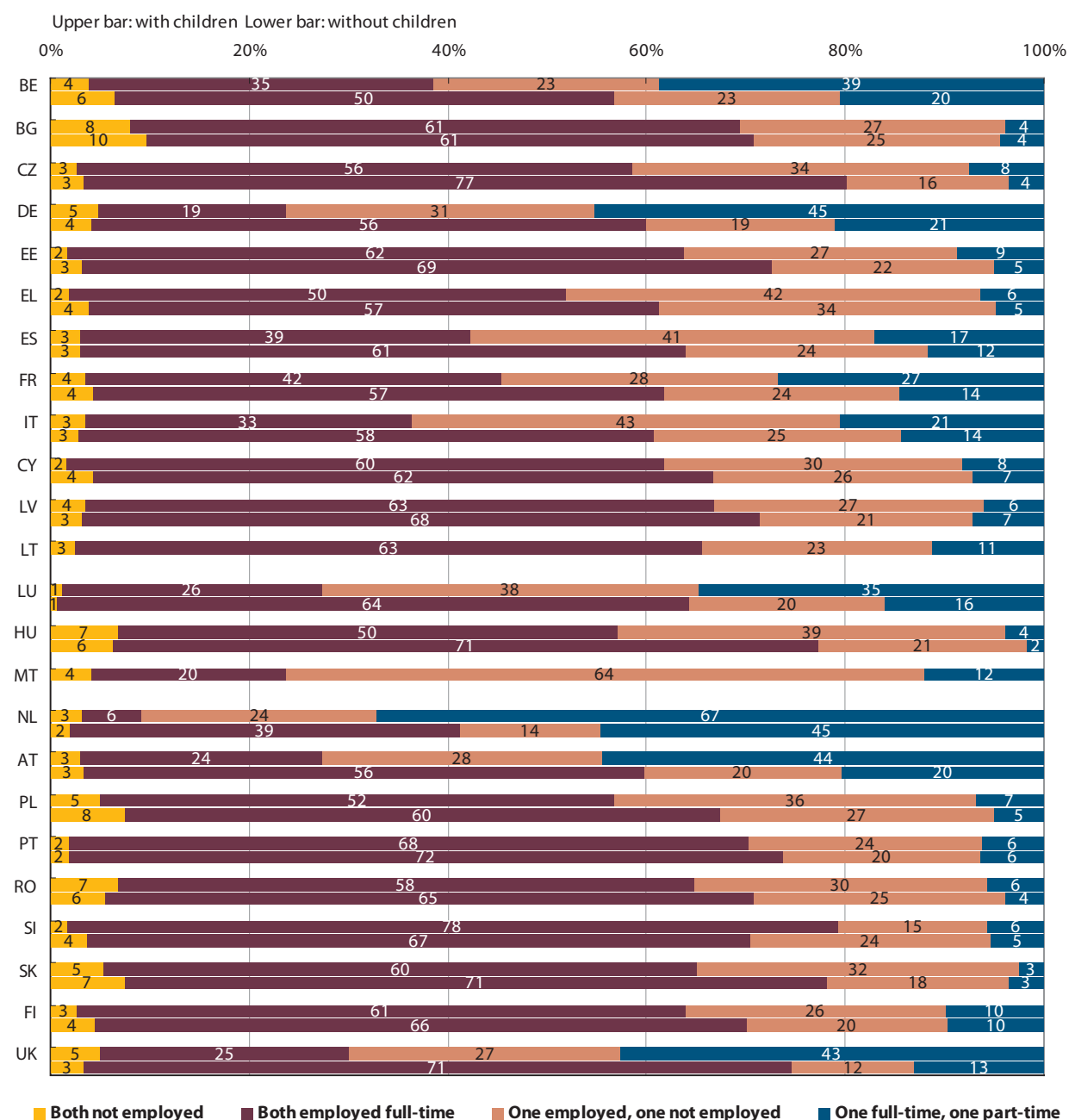
The most widespread working pattern for persons living in a couple *without* children is 'both working full-time'. With the exception of the Netherlands (39%), this share stood above 50% in all Member States. The highest shares (above 70%) were observed in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia and the United Kingdom. The second most relevant pattern observed among couples without children was 'one person working full-time and the other person not working', with shares ranging from 12% in United Kingdom to 34% in Greece. The third type of employment pattern, with one partner working full-time and the other working part-time, was fairly common in Belgium, Germany and Austria, with shares of around 20%. However, this type of working pattern was most widespread in the Netherlands, with 45%. The fourth and last working pattern, in which both partners are unemployed, accounts for only a minor share to the overall distribution of couples without children.

For persons living as couples *with* children, the employment patterns 'both working full-time' is also the most frequent. However, this share stood above 50% in only 14 Member States. It is recalled that in many Eastern European Member States, the dual full-time earner model was traditionally the norm, particularly in communist times, although it became less common in recent years, partly explained by the high cost of formal childcare<sup>(8)</sup>. Moreover, in some countries other employment patterns are prevalent: in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and the United Kingdom the pattern 'one working full-time and the other person working part-time' was the most widespread. In Spain, Italy and Luxembourg the situation where one person is employed (full-time or part-time) and the other person is not employed is the group with highest shares. Again the situation where both persons are not working are not widespread in the Member states.

Comparing couples with and without children reveals that, with the exception of Slovenia, in all Member States the presence of a child in the household leads to a decrease in the working pattern where both persons are working full-time. One reason to explain this drop may be found in the need to organise childcare responsibilities within the household.

<sup>(8)</sup> See also: The Cost of Childcare in EU countries – Transversal Analysis – European Parliament, Economic and Scientific Policy, document IP/A/EMPL/FWC/SC/2006-05/SC1 – Brussels, 2007



**Figure 2.7:** Employment status of persons living in households as couples, 2006*Age group 25-49, in relation to the presence of children in the household*

Notes: Analysis based on a specific LFS database allowing household composition breakdowns. This database does not contain information on DK and SE. – IE: no data available. – LT and MT without children: unreliable data due to small sample size.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

Drawing similar conclusions for ‘other households’ is not straightforward, as this category is quite heterogeneous. The most common employment model in these households often comprising three generations is ‘at least one adult working and one adult not working’; the presence of children does not

radically alter this pattern (data not shown). In countries with a wide availability of part-time employment, the presence of children in the household seems to cause a shift either towards more full-time employment or towards one adult giving up his or her job.





### 2.2.3. Impact of parenthood on employment rates

While the previous section analysed the household structure, the following paragraphs will consider the impact of parenthood on the individual employment rates in more detail, by focusing on the presence of children below 15 years of age.

Labour market participation patterns have for a long time remained unchanged by family structures. The 'male breadwinner' model was the dominant form, with men starting their professional careers in their early twenties, marrying a woman and starting a family around their mid-twenties. The impact of children on men's professional lives has long been small if not insignificant.

Over the past decades, major changes have occurred. The formerly predictable life course of men and women has changed radically, and family patterns have become more diverse, with people choosing to postpone marriage and/or parenting or refraining altogether from having children. Today, the career choices of men and women vary substantially according to the timing and nature of their decisions and expectations on family life. Education and apprenticeship also tend to last increasingly longer.

The participation of women in the labour market continues to rise but still depends on various factors. Women's participation in the workforce continues to be affected by their predominant role in the care of children. Therefore, the presence and number of children, as well as the age of the youngest child can have a marked influence on female employment rates.

Table 2.5 presents the employment rate of men and women in the various EU Member States, depending on their parental status. Expectedly, the presence of children appears to have a negative impact on the employment rate of women. According to the European Labour Force Survey, the deepest impact on women's employment rate was registered in the Czech Republic, Hungary and Malta (over 15 percentage points). Conversely, little or no impact was registered in Belgium and Lithuania. More surprisingly, the employment rate of women actually increased in the presence of children in Portugal and Slovenia.

However, the reverse was observed among men: in all Member States, the male employment rate rose in the presence of children, ranging from moderate differences registered in Bulgaria and Austria (4 and 5 percentage points respectively) to tangible discrepancies in Belgium, France, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Finland (more than 10 percentage points).

Childcare costs can be very high for parents, especially when they have more than one child. While women with a single child can succeed in combining motherhood and work with some organisational restructuring, this becomes increasingly difficult with two or more children, despite the fact that some

**Table 2.5:** Employment rates of individuals with and without children (under 15), 2006

Age group 25-49

	Without children		With children		Difference	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
<b>EU-27</b>	78.3	82.4	67.0	90.0	-11.3	7.7
<b>EA-15</b>	77.3	82.8	66.3	91.6	-10.9	8.8
<b>BE</b>	75.8	81.4	72.4	91.4	-3.5	10.0
<b>BG</b>	77.3	77.1	71.4	81.2	-5.9	4.1
<b>CZ</b>	84.8	87.8	68.3	93.7	-16.5	5.9
<b>DE</b>	82.3	81.6	68.5	90.6	-13.8	8.9
<b>EE</b>	85.6	83.5	78.7	93.2	-7.0	9.7
<b>EL</b>	67.3	86.2	59.4	95.1	-7.9	8.9
<b>ES</b>	75.0	84.1	60.6	91.3	-14.4	7.2
<b>FR</b>	79.9	81.1	72.0	91.3	-7.9	10.3
<b>IT</b>	68.2	82.6	55.8	91.7	-12.4	9.1
<b>CY</b>	82.3	87.2	73.2	95.2	-9.1	8.0
<b>LV</b>	81.8	78.9	77.4	87.4	-4.5	8.5
<b>LT</b>	83.0	78.0	80.1	88.1	-2.9	10.0
<b>LU</b>	82.8	90.1	65.4	94.8	-17.4	4.7
<b>HU</b>	79.2	80.5	62.2	85.4	-17.1	4.9
<b>MT</b>	65.6	87.6	31.4	93.2	-34.2	5.6
<b>NL</b>	85.1	87.7	73.8	94.2	-11.3	6.5
<b>AT</b>	83.6	88.5	73.9	93.1	-9.7	4.5
<b>PL</b>	74.1	72.6	66.2	84.6	-7.8	12.1
<b>PT</b>	76.2	82.5	76.9	91.9	0.7	9.4
<b>RO</b>	73.6	78.7	69.6	83.5	-4.0	4.8
<b>SI</b>	79.0	83.1	85.6	93.2	6.6	10.1
<b>SK</b>	79.3	79.0	66.7	88.6	-12.5	9.6
<b>FI</b>	81.8	80.4	76.8	92.5	-5.0	12.1
<b>UK</b>	85.6	85.5	68.4	90.9	-17.1	5.4

Notes: it should be noted that the analysis is based on a specific LFS database allowing household composition breakdowns. This database does not contain information on DK and SE. – IE: no data available – Difference: expressed in percentage points.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

countries provide extra social benefits for parents of three or more children. Therefore, in many cases, and especially for lower income groups, women with two or more children will prefer to shoulder childcare responsibilities, as childcare costs are no longer affordable<sup>(9)</sup>. Hence, employment rates are likely to decrease as the number of children increases. This picture is largely confirmed when looking at Table 2.6, at least for women.

<sup>(9)</sup> The Cost of Childcare in EU countries – Transversal Analysis – European Parliament, Economic and Scientific Policy, document IP/A/EMPL/FWC/SC/2006-05/SC1 – Brussels, 2007

With the incremental financial burden of child-rearing, the employment rate of men should rise in proportion to the number of children. Table 2.6 reveals that the shift in employment rates between men with one child and men with two children were in fact negligible, oscillating between one or two percentage points (except for Bulgaria where that rate fell by 1 percentage point). With three or more children, male employment rates remained stable at a relatively high level in most Member States, but a drop was registered in a number of new Member States, including the Czech Republic, Germany, Latvia, Portugal and the United Kingdom (around 7 percentage points) and, most strikingly, in Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia (with more than 10 percentage points). In the latter country, large families are often found in rural areas. Even if a large number of children does not influence the usual child allowances, it may influence the eligibility to other

social benefits. For low-income families, these benefits may then comprise a sizeable share of the family income.

On the other hand, employment rates remain very stable in Cyprus, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Finland.

Expectedly, the situation is quite different for women: in most countries, female employment rates decreased with the number of children, with a gradual drop for the first two children and a more outspoken drop from the third child onwards. The decrease was very tangible in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Slovakia and the United Kingdom. In Slovenia, the female employment rate remained surprisingly stable, with this country accounted for the highest employment rates for women with three or more children: 85%.

**Table 2.6:** Employment rates by number of children, 2006 (%)

Age group 25-49

	Men			Women		
	Number of children			Number of children		
	1	2	3+	1	2	3+
<b>EU-27</b>	89.4	91.8	86.7	71.2	67.3	53.0
<b>EA-15</b>	90.8	93.2	89.6	70.3	65.9	53.9
<b>BE</b>	91.2	93.7	87.1	75.9	76.3	58.0
<b>BG</b>	83.1	81.8	58.5	75.2	70.8	36.6
<b>CZ</b>	92.9	95.6	88.4	69.4	70.9	51.3
<b>DE</b>	90.2	92.4	85.9	73.9	67.7	49.6
<b>EE</b>	93.1	94.3	90.4	83.4	76.2	64.0
<b>EL</b>	93.2	96.7	94.9	61.4	59.2	52.9
<b>ES</b>	90.2	92.6	90.9	64.7	58.1	50.3
<b>FR</b>	90.5	92.5	90.2	77.5	73.9	56.7
<b>IT</b>	90.5	93.2	90.9	60.1	53.5	41.8
<b>CY</b>	92.9	96.0	96.9	76.6	76.2	63.3
<b>LV</b>	87.3	89.4	82.6	80.3	77.2	65.1
<b>LT</b>	85.7	90.3	88.0	81.5	81.6	72.0
<b>LU</b>	93.2	95.7	95.7	74.0	65.2	51.1
<b>HU</b>	85.7	88.9	75.9	66.5	66.4	39.1
<b>MT</b>	93.6	94.7	89.8	39.1	27.8	21.7
<b>NL</b>	93.7	95.5	92.1	75.3	76.5	65.1
<b>AT</b>	93.4	94.0	89.3	80.1	72.3	57.9
<b>PL</b>	83.3	86.6	83.3	69.6	66.9	57.0
<b>PT</b>	91.5	93.6	86.8	78.0	77.5	65.8
<b>RO</b>	84.4	84.9	75.3	73.9	69.1	53.4
<b>SI</b>	91.2	94.9	94.1	84.3	87.2	84.7
<b>SK</b>	89.6	91.7	79.0	70.1	69.6	52.2
<b>FI</b>	92.0	93.1	92.2	78.7	80.9	66.5
<b>UK</b>	91.5	92.7	85.4	75.5	71.0	47.9

Notes: it should be noted that the analysis is based on a specific LFS database allowing household composition breakdowns. This database does not contain information on DK and SE. – IE: no data available.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.



Obviously, the age of children in the household (especially of the youngest child) is a crucial factor in the decision to work or not. Different scenarios exist: women may prefer to remain at home when children are very young and return to work once they are old enough to go to school; others may turn to childcare facilities when children are very young and stop working once they are sent to school and spend more time on caring then. Decisions are influenced by factors such as the availability, quality and cost of childcare facilities, the “operating times” of the national school system, the number of children and possibilities of special working time arrangements granted by the employer.

Table 2.7 reveals that the age of the youngest child appears to have virtually no effect on the employment rate of fathers aged between 25 and 49. Indeed, fluctuations are small and no distinct pattern emerges. The picture is very different for mothers: at first glance, female employment rates seem to increase with the age of the youngest child. But there are noticeable differences: employment rates remained fairly constant in Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands (with a high proportion of part-time employment), Portugal and Slovenia.

In the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia and to a lesser degree in Bulgaria, the employment rates of women with children aged 0–2 were very low and increased sharply in relation to the age of children, with female employment rates exceeding 75% when the youngest child is 12 to 14 years old. Conversely, the employment rate of women in Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal seems to be constant as the youngest child grows older.

Bearing in mind a broadly comparable gender cultural context, Greece, Spain and Italy not only offer similar (and comparatively low) female employment rates, but these countries also feature little difference in female employment rates in relation to the progressing age of children.

Malta appears to be a special case: aside from very low employment rates among women, their labour market participation decreased with the age of children: around 3 in 10 Maltese mothers (aged 25–49) with children between 12 and 14 were in employment. This contrasts sharply with, for instance, Czech, Estonian and Finnish mothers in the same situation, where 9 in 10 were employed.

**Table 2.7:** Employment rates by age of the youngest child, 2006 (%)

Age group 25–49

	Men			Women		
	Child aged 0 to 5	Child aged 6 to 11	Child aged 12 to 14	Child aged 0 to 5	Child aged 6 to 11	Child aged 12 to 14
<b>EU-27</b>	91.2	90.8	87.3	59.7	69.8	73.5
<b>EA-15</b>	92.5	92.6	89.0	61.3	68.6	71.0
<b>BE</b>	90.7	92.5	91.5	70.3	72.8	74.5
<b>BG</b>	79.6	82.1	81.6	53.6	74.0	79.4
<b>CZ</b>	93.2	94.9	93.5	35.1	81.5	89.4
<b>DE</b>	90.6	92.0	88.9	59.2	70.3	77.1
<b>EE</b>	92.2	93.5	94.2	58.9	86.1	89.5
<b>EL</b>	97.1	95.8	91.2	55.8	60.6	62.1
<b>ES</b>	92.8	92.7	87.0	58.0	61.9	63.3
<b>FR</b>	91.7	91.3	90.6	64.7	76.4	80.0
<b>IT</b>	93.7	93.2	86.6	54.2	57.1	56.6
<b>CY</b>	95.4	95.8	94.3	70.1	74.8	75.4
<b>LV</b>	88.8	89.3	84.8	61.7	82.5	86.5
<b>LT</b>	89.1	87.4	87.7	73.9	82.5	83.2
<b>LU</b>	95.6	96.0	91.8	64.3	66.6	65.9
<b>HU</b>	85.8	86.1	84.3	36.4	70.4	79.7
<b>MT</b>	93.2	93.3	94.4	33.8	27.2	33.0
<b>NL</b>	94.4	94.6	93.4	72.8	74.1	75.2
<b>AT</b>	92.0	94.3	93.3	62.7	77.7	84.0
<b>PL</b>	88.2	85.4	80.3	56.9	67.7	73.4
<b>PT</b>	94.2	91.4	88.8	76.6	77.3	76.9
<b>RO</b>	84.5	84.4	82.0	66.1	68.4	72.8
<b>SI</b>	94.2	95.7	90.6	83.6	88.7	85.4
<b>SK</b>	86.2	89.4	90.4	37.9	78.3	83.3
<b>FI</b>	92.5	93.0	91.8	62.7	85.9	89.5
<b>UK</b>	91.1	90.8	90.7	60.3	72.4	77.8

Notes: it should be noted that analysis is based on a specific LFS database allowing household composition breakdowns. This database does not contain information on DK and SE. – IE: no data available.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

When considering the overall employment rate of women in the individual Member States, one often forgets that there are significant variations within the same country. Several factors affect the employment rates of women, the most significant being education and family circumstances. In general, highly qualified women are far better integrated in the labour market than those with lower qualifications, and the former also tend to maintain more stable career paths during their working lives. Conversely, women with a low level of education usually face difficulties in entering the job market and/or finding a

job after temporary interruptions. The education level plays an even greater role when women have children and other family responsibilities.

Table 2.8 outlines that even if female employment rates across the categories vary between Member States, they generally increase with the level of education. When the presence of children (and their number) is taken into account, the employment rate drops as the number of children rises (as already outlined in Table 2.6), but this drop is more pronounced among the less educated.

**Table 2.8:** Female employment rates by level of education and number of children, 2006 (%)

Age group 25-49

	Low				Medium				High			
	Number of children				Number of children				Number of children			
	0	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+
<b>EU-27</b>	61.3	55.8	49.1	35.2	79.9	73.2	69.1	56.9	87.8	83.7	82.9	75.2
<b>EA-15</b>	61.2	55.3	48.1	36.7	79.9	74.1	68.8	58.0	85.9	82.6	82.5	75.0
<b>BE</b>	53.3	59.5	49.3	30.5	76.9	75.7	75.1	57.5	88.5	88.5	89.6	81.1
<b>BG</b>	46.8	48.5	41.7	26.5	79.0	74.7	76.4	58.4	90.3	87.3	86.7	:
<b>CZ</b>	58.4	55.0	52.9	23.9	86.6	70.5	71.1	55.0	91.3	70.4	77.8	68.6
<b>DE</b>	66.5	55.3	49.2	31.0	82.4	75.0	68.4	54.9	90.8	85.3	81.8	69.1
<b>EE</b>	:	:	:	:	84.7	79.9	74.4	61.2	90.8	89.0	84.2	:
<b>EL</b>	50.6	48.4	44.2	45.7	67.3	60.1	56.6	48.8	82.3	81.3	80.7	77.1
<b>ES</b>	59.9	50.6	45.7	36.4	76.8	68.5	57.9	52.3	83.9	79.6	76.2	72.3
<b>FR</b>	66.5	65.0	57.7	40.9	83.9	80.5	74.1	58.8	85.2	83.8	84.2	74.4
<b>IT</b>	53.8	45.7	35.2	26.1	74.2	68.2	63.3	54.5	77.6	75.0	80.5	75.5
<b>CY</b>	77.2	61.8	63.6	47.5	80.0	76.7	73.1	60.1	86.9	84.1	86.5	82.8
<b>LV</b>	62.2	49.0	:	:	79.3	80.3	77.8	65.4	90.7	89.2	82.9	94.4
<b>LT</b>	:	:	:	:	78.7	77.2	79.2	70.6	93.0	92.6	90.1	86.6
<b>LU</b>	67.6	67.4	60.9	50.5	84.6	73.3	64.3	45.1	89.6	85.4	75.2	63.1
<b>HU</b>	50.2	50.3	41.6	20.2	81.1	68.7	67.9	43.8	93.6	72.7	81.7	71.4
<b>MT</b>	51.0	26.4	18.6	:	86.0	70.7	60.8	:	91.9	81.1	70.9	:
<b>NL</b>	66.4	61.5	58.6	43.1	87.6	77.3	78.6	68.9	91.9	87.3	88.1	81.6
<b>AT</b>	71.0	66.9	56.8	43.1	85.7	82.8	74.1	63.6	90.0	85.8	83.8	70.2
<b>PL</b>	37.9	45.0	45.1	35.8	69.1	66.4	63.9	58.1	90.0	84.7	85.9	86.7
<b>PT</b>	71.1	73.9	72.6	59.0	75.5	81.4	85.2	79.1	86.2	90.4	91.2	89.6
<b>RO</b>	55.9	53.1	49.9	42.4	73.7	74.9	72.0	61.5	90.6	92.3	93.4	:
<b>SI</b>	68.3	72.1	73.5	68.4	76.0	82.9	86.3	84.8	90.2	93.0	95.1	95.3
<b>SK</b>	39.5	42.5	40.0	16.9	81.4	70.6	70.1	59.3	92.7	82.2	78.8	64.9
<b>FI</b>	61.1	70.1	70.4	47.8	77.3	77.5	77.3	65.4	90.9	82.1	85.4	72.9
<b>UK</b>	70.5	63.8	57.6	30.8	86.4	76.3	71.7	49.9	93.0	86.8	82.1	72.2

Notes: it should be noted that the analysis is based on a specific LFS database allowing household composition breakdowns. This database does not contain information on DK and SE. – IE: no data available – ‘:’: no data available.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

Table 2.8 presents a number of remarkable figures. There are not many countries where highly educated women tend not to work in the presence of one or two children, these countries include the Czech Republic, Germany, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Slovakia and the United Kingdom (10 percentage points less than compared to women without children). On the other hand in Belgium, Greece, France,

Italy, Cyprus, Portugal, Romania and Slovenia the employment rates increase in the presence of one or two children. Considering not only the cost of childcare but also the ‘logistics’ involved in raising children, it is not surprising that a sharper drop in employment rates is usually registered from the third child onwards.



The general picture for women with a medium education level is quite similar to that of highly educated women, but decreases in employment rates were more pronounced. In the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, Malta and Spain the drop was significant in the presence of two children (between 15 and 25 percentage points). Employment rates of women with a medium level of education remained relatively stable in the presence of one or two children in Belgium, Bulgaria, Latvia, Romania and Finland.

There was little difference between women with a low and medium level of education. Overall, the same pattern countries where the decrease in employment rate in the presence of one or two children is more than 15 percentage points. On the other hand, a considerable increase in employment rates was registered in Poland, Slovenia and Finland.

The various sections above have revealed that in today's economies, there is an increasing pressure for a more flexible use of labour. The traditional form of work based on full-time employment and long tenure has been gradually eroded and employment conditions have changed. With the expansion of the services sector and a gradual change in societal values, working time preferences have become more diverse and 'non-standard' work contracts have been introduced. Whereas fixed-term employment appears fairly gender-

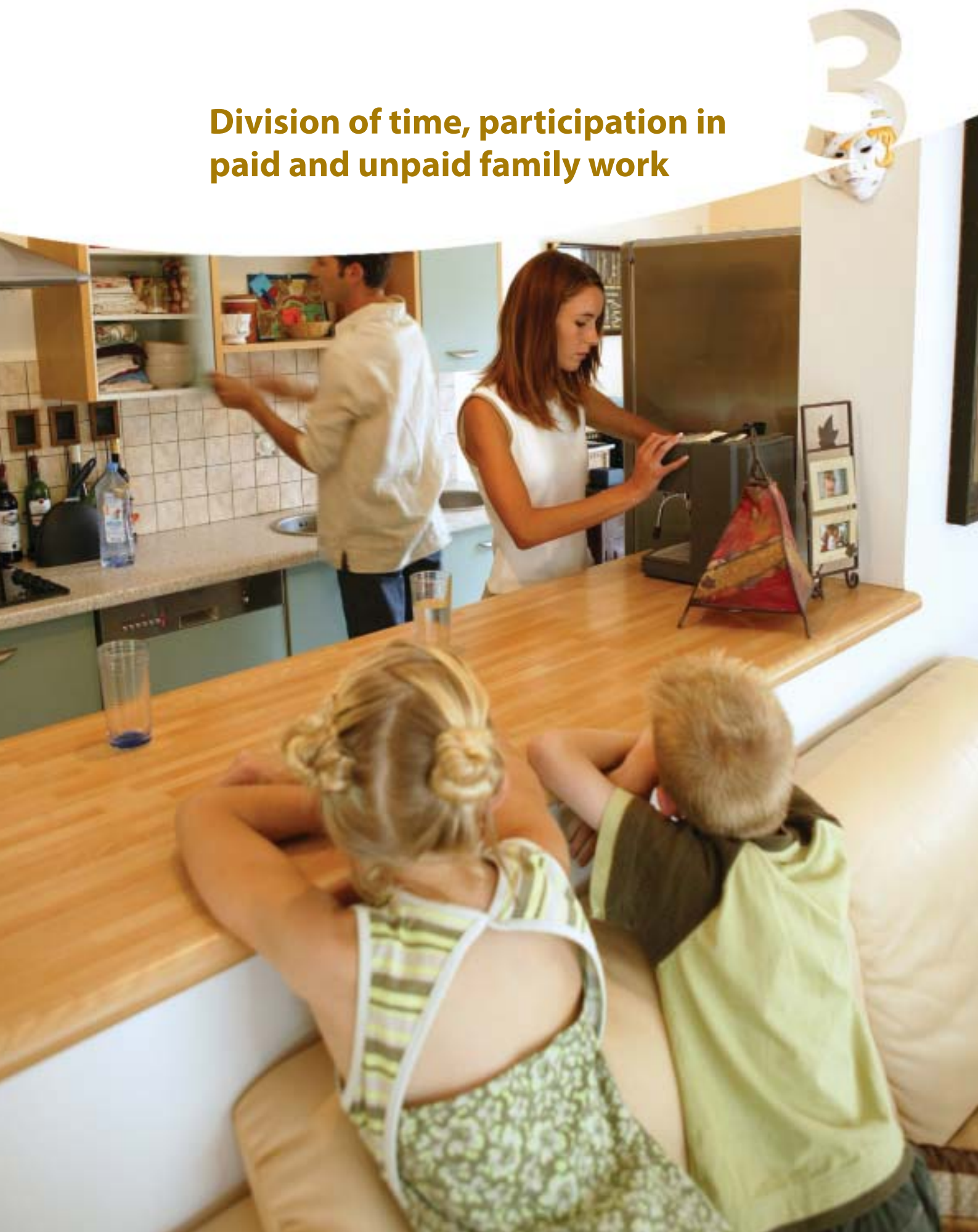
balanced, part-time positions are more often taken by women. Part-time employment is far more widespread in Northern Europe than in Southern Europe or the new Member States. Recent statistics also tend to indicate an increase in part-time employment, including among men. Whereas most women work part-time because of caring responsibilities, many men do so because they cannot find a full-time job.

The presence of children in the household certainly has an impact on the employment pattern of the members of the household, but there is no predominant pattern. Full-time employment is obviously widespread among singles without children, yet it remains quite common among singles with children, especially in the new Member States. Regarding couples with children, the working pattern involving both partners in a full-time job is also quite common, although in some countries the 'one-and-a-half earner' model is more widespread (such as in the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and the United Kingdom.)

The employment rate of women expectedly drops with the number of children, especially among the less educated. Whereas the decrease is gradual for the first two children, it is quite sharp from the third child onwards. Conversely, the employment rate of men increases in the presence of children; in certain countries the difference can exceed 10 percentage points.



## Division of time, participation in paid and unpaid family work





The reconciliation between professional obligations and family and social commitments also involves issues linked to the actual time spent at work and the time needed to carry out essential responsibilities outside the workplace, such as the time committed to household tasks or caring for family members. This chapter intends to describe how Europeans spend their time, both in gainful work and in unpaid work. The European Labour Force Survey provides a regular and valuable source of information on EU labour markets, however aside from certain ad hoc modules, they provide little information on how work is perceived by individuals, especially with regard to existing commitments outside the place of (gainful) work.

In this context, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) has launched a series of surveys on working conditions in

Europe (European Working Conditions Survey – EWCS, see box below). Key results from these surveys aim at monitoring trends and changes in working conditions over time, which can be useful for policymakers. In the present chapter, EWCS data are used to draw a better picture of how working citizens perceive their work–private life balance. Because of the strict definition set for survey respondents, the EWCS sample survey only includes people in paid employment. However, unpaid work is not only performed by people in paid employment; in fact, a very sizeable share of unpaid work is carried out by people not engaged in gainful work (such as women at home). Therefore data on unpaid working hours should be interpreted with due care, as in the present analysis figures only express unpaid working hours carried out by persons in paid employment.

### The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS)

The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) is carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, an autonomous EU agency based in Dublin.

Between 19 September and 30 November 2005, the Foundation carried out its fourth European Working Conditions Survey. Almost 30 000 European workers were interviewed in 31 countries (the EU-25 Member States (before the latest enlargement) plus Bulgaria, Croatia, Norway, Romania, Turkey and Switzerland), answering more than 100 items on a wide range of issues regarding their employment situation and working conditions.

The statistical population includes all persons aged 15 or over whose usual place of residence is in the territory of the Member States of the European Union and acceding, candidate and EEA countries, and who were in employment during the reference period. Some countries apply a different lower age limit (16 years in Spain, the UK and Norway), while others have set an upper age limit (74 years in Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Finland, Sweden and Norway). A person is considered as being in employment if he or she did any work for pay or profit during the reference week for at least one hour. This is the same definition as in the LFS, and the same inclusion and exclusion rules apply.

For further information:

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, “Quality report of the 4th European working conditions survey”, 2007

<http://www.data-archive.ac.uk/doc/5639%5Cmrdoc%5Cpdf%5C5639userguide.pdf>

The household structure, and particularly the presence of children, is closely linked to time use. The allocation of time between work and domestic tasks varies considerably when

children – young ones especially – are present in the household. The following sections outline the time use of individuals, with a specific focus on couples with children.



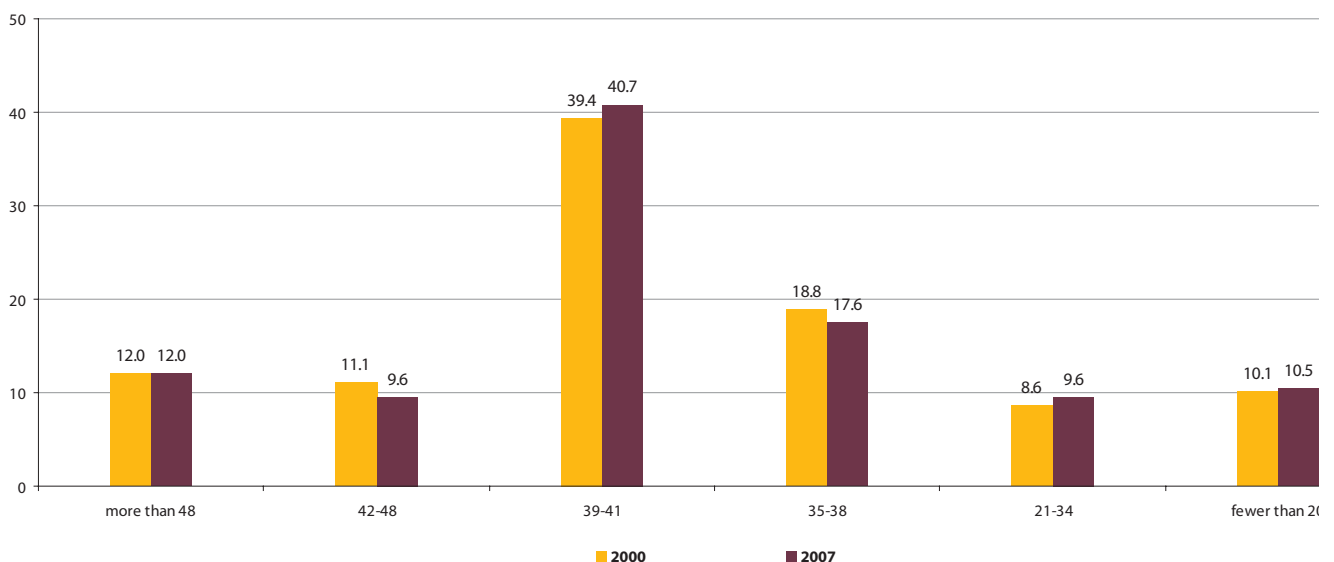
### 3.1 Evolution of weekly working hours

There has been a trend in the EU towards a slight reduction in the number of hours usually worked. Indeed, regardless of working full-time or part-time, the average employed EU citizen worked 38.1 hours in 2007, compared to 38.3 hours in 2000 (data not shown). However, a more interesting picture can be drawn when looking at the various working hour categories, as shown in Figure 3.1. The proportion of people working more than 41 hours a week has slightly decreased

since 2000, while the proportion of people working shorter hours is increasing. In 2007, most employed persons (40.7%) worked between 39 and 41 hours per week. Whereas the share of persons working 48 hours or more has remained unchanged compared to 2000, the proportion of those working 42–48 hours and 35–38 hours a week has decreased. Conversely, the share of those working less than 34 hours a week has risen slightly.

**Figure 3.1:** Evolution of usual weekly working hours, 2000 and 2007, EU-27 (%)

*Population aged 15-64, in employment*



Source: Eurostat, LFS.

Working time is measured in labour force surveys as the time spent in the jobs that produce goods and services that are included in GDP. This makes sense from the labour market perspective and is in line with the standards set by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). For this publication however, it would be useful to broaden this definition and also consider the time indirectly related to paid work and time spent in performing unpaid work.

Indeed, from the point of view of reconciling work and private life, there is a case for taking into account:

- commuting time, i.e. time spent travelling to and from work. Although from the perspective of the employer this is not working time, for the employee it is definitely considered as time devoted to work. It should, therefore, be taken into account when discussing time dedicated to work.
- the time spent in unpaid work, which is clearly as important in societal and economic terms as paid work, even if it is not remunerated by the market. Obviously, from the perspective of the individual, unpaid work (time spent on household duties, and caring for children and adults) still represents work, so it can be considered as such, even if it is not placed in the same category as paid work.

Although an increasing number of women have careers, what is socially expected of them inside the home often remains much the same. Frequently referred to as women's "double

shift", these demands tend to limit period of free time women have and to perpetuate gender stereotypes. Although men are increasingly involved in household tasks that were formerly (and in certain countries largely remain) the preserve of women, the amount and structure of time devoted by men to unpaid work is often quite different.

The archetypal household tasks attributed to men include car maintenance, home improvements and repairs. These tasks are often carried out on an irregular basis, which means that there is more control over "whether, how, and when" they need to be done. Some tasks traditionally attributed to women, such as clothes shopping and home decorating are similar to male tasks in that they do not have to be performed on a regular basis, which affords a high level of schedule control over them. However, other traditionally female tasks, such as laundry washing, cooking and grocery shopping are done on a routine schedule and allow only a low level of control over whether, how, and when they need to be done. These routine chores make up the bulk of unpaid working hours.

The following sections take a closer look at the distribution of paid and unpaid working hours in the individual Member States and the related impact of children. Time use survey data complete this analysis by offering further details on unpaid working hours.

## 3.2 Paid and unpaid working hours

### General structure

The figure below presents results of the fourth European Working Conditions Survey (2005), giving a breakdown of the hours spent in paid and unpaid work in the EU-27, Norway and Switzerland. This composite indicator on working hours comprises the average number of weekly working hours, plus the average weekly working hours in jobs other than the main job, the time spent commuting as well as the total weekly unpaid working hours. It should be noted that the figures refer only to persons in employment.

The countries were ranked in decreasing order of total working time; at a glance it seems that the contrast between weekly working hours and total composite working hours is considerable.

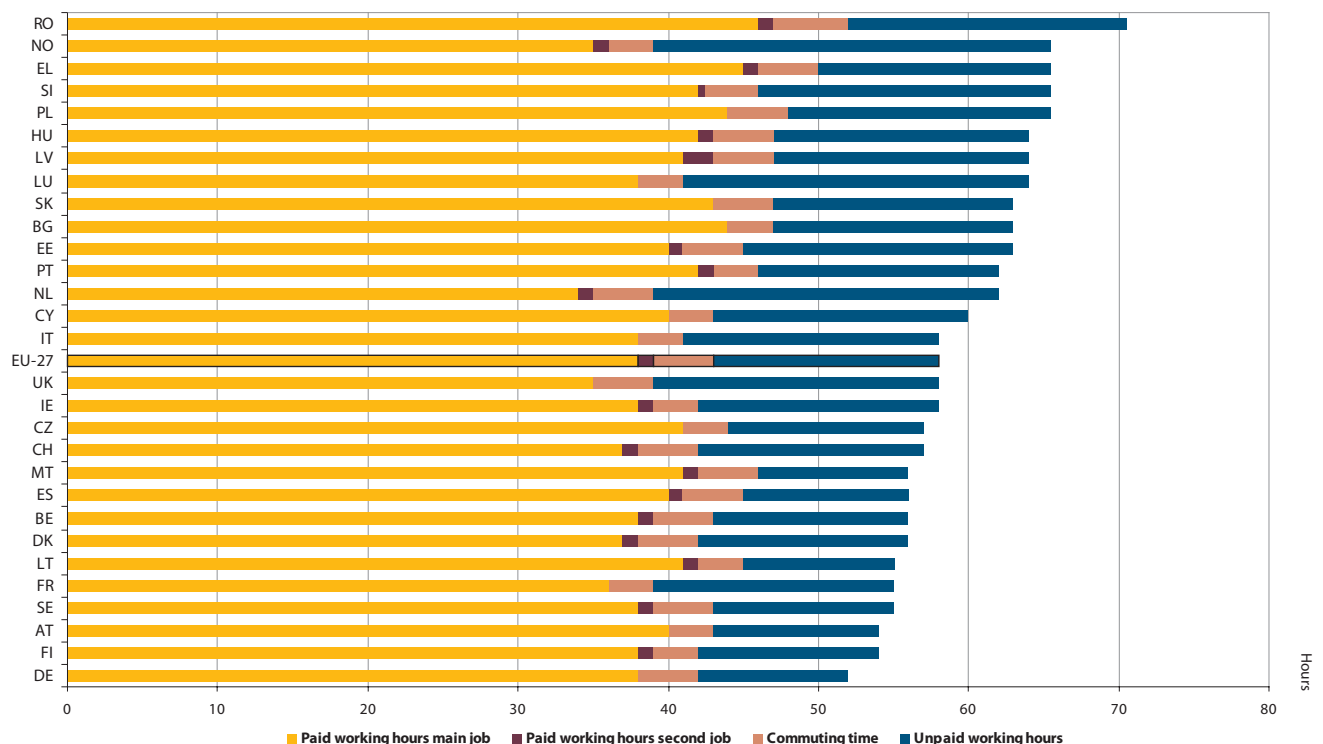
At EU-27 level, the total weekly time spent on paid and unpaid work amounted to 58 hours, 39 of which were paid working hours (an average 38 hours in the main job and an additional 1 hour in a second job), 4 were spent on commuting and the remaining 15 were unpaid. Differences between individual countries are substantial, ranging from a total of 70.5 hours in Romania to 52 hours in Germany.

The high values registered in Romania are influenced by two factors: the longest average paid working hours among all countries considered (46 hours per week) and the longest commuting time (5 hours). The time spent on unpaid work amounted to 18.5 hours, which is above the EU average (15 hours), but not exceptionally high.

Four countries follow with an identical composite number of hours: 65.5 hours were registered for Norway, Greece, Slovenia and Poland. Whereas the three latter roughly present a similar breakdown, Norway registered a fairly high amount of unpaid working hours.

It also appears that when the average number of paid working hours is comparatively low, the time spent on unpaid work tends to be higher. This is especially the case in the Netherlands, and – to a lesser extent – in the United Kingdom. It should also be highlighted that countries with a comparatively low average number of paid working hours generally offer a fairly high share of part-time jobs.

**Figure 3.2:** Weekly hours spent on paid and unpaid work, by country, 2005



Note: The composite working hours indicator is made up of the weekly working hours, plus the average weekly working hours in jobs other than the main job, commuting time and the total weekly unpaid working hours, declared by workers aged 15 or over.

Source: EWCS.

When looking at the gender breakdown for combined working hours by country, results indicate that there is a marked difference between women and men in terms of unpaid working hours. Figure 3.3, which shows groupings of countries with similar working time patterns<sup>(1)</sup>, reveals that although on average, men work longer hours in paid employment overall, women actually work more hours than men when paid and unpaid working hours are combined.

Women in Bulgaria and Romania appear to be carrying the highest burden: the 78 hours of total work they face each week are essentially the result of the longest paid working hours and long unpaid working hours. Conversely, working women in Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and Austria spend on average 19 hours less per week (59 hours) on paid and unpaid work. Of these 19 hours' difference, 10 can be ascribed to the lower average length of paid working time, notably due to higher recourse to part-time jobs in these countries.

The same group of countries stand out when considering the lowest working time for men, with an average 50 hours a

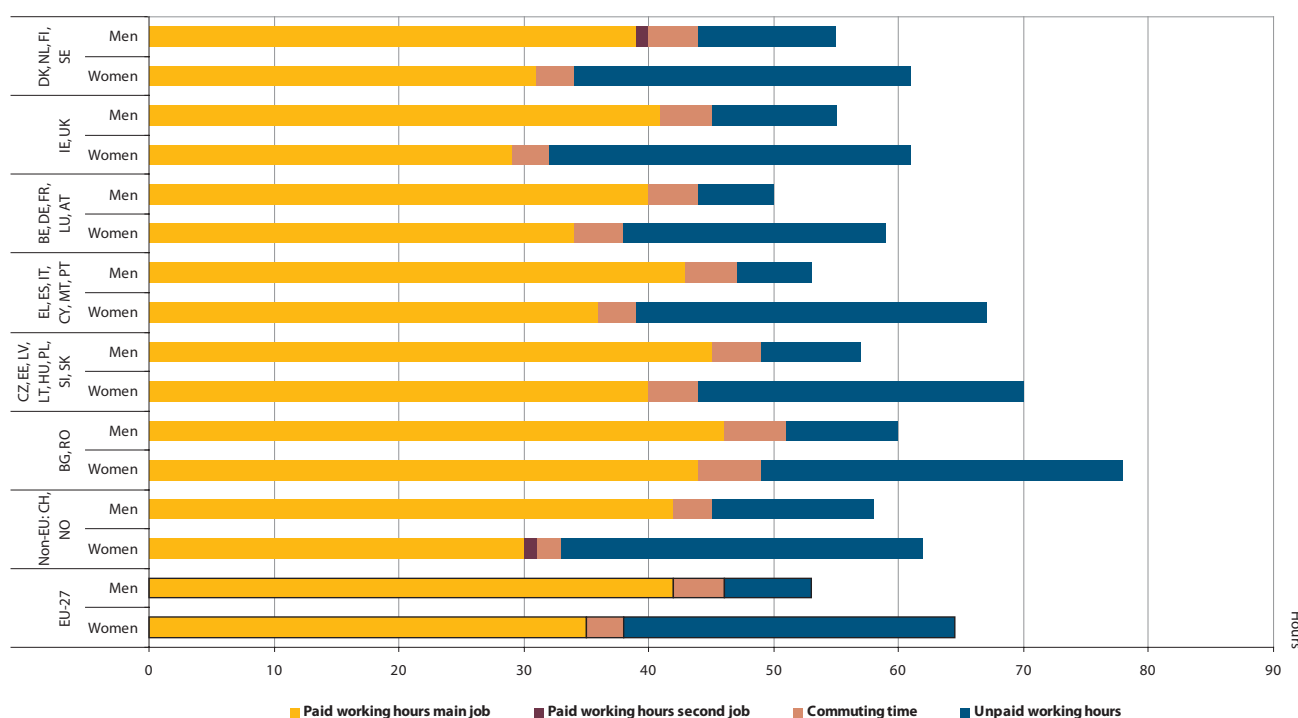
week: 40 in gainful work, 4 on commuting and 6 on unpaid working hours. Conversely, the highest number of working hours was registered for Swiss and Norwegian men, mostly due to their stronger involvement in unpaid work (13 hours a week).

Turning from the country groupings to the situation in the individual Member States (data not shown due to space constraints), it appears that Latvian women frequently have a second job, as on average 1.03 hours per week were registered, far above the EU average of 0.30 hours. The other Baltic States also score comparatively high Estonia: 0.56 hours and Lithuania 0.50 hours).

Other national particularities include French men, with the shortest average weekly paid working hours in the main job, at 37.4 hours (EU average: 41.7 hours); Dutch men, with the longest average weekly commuting time (4.3 hours, against an EU average of 3.5 hours) and Dutch women, who excel in the number of unpaid working hours. With 36.6 hours per week, the latter spent 10 hours per week more than the average employed women in the EU (25.5 hours).

<sup>(1)</sup> Based on an adapted Esping-Andersen typology – Esping-Andersen, G., *The three worlds of welfare capitalism*, Cambridge, Polity Press, 1990.

**Figure 3.3:** Composite indicator of working time, by country group and gender, 2005 (hours)



Note: The composite working hours indicator is made up of the weekly working hours, plus the average weekly working hours in jobs other than the main job, commuting time and the total weekly unpaid working hours, declared by male and female workers aged 15 and over.

Source: EWCS.

Looking at composite working hours according to full- and part-time employment reveals a number of interesting aspects. For women working part-time, the average time spent on unpaid work exceeds by far that spent on paid work, with an average 21 hours per week spent in paid work, against 32 hours in unpaid work. As such, this is not surprising. More interesting is the fact that men working part-time seem to trade in far less paid for unpaid working time (the paid–unpaid working time ratio is 33%).

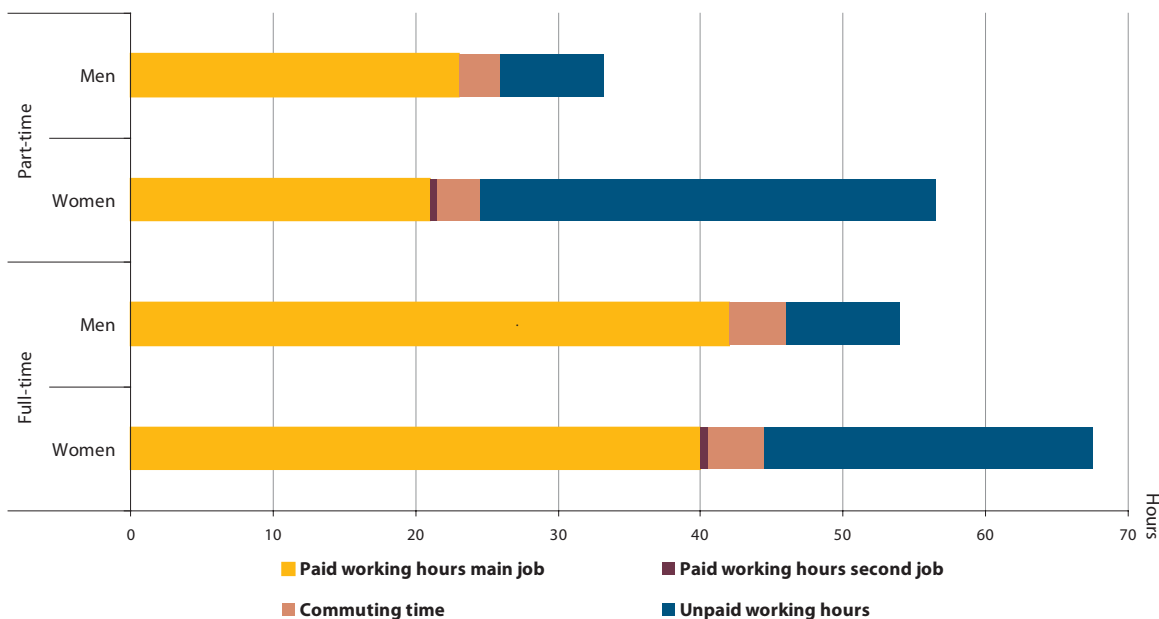
It should also be noted that when considering paid and unpaid work in combination, as measured by the European Working Conditions Survey, female part-time workers work slightly longer per week than men in full-time employment (56 hours against 54). Women working full-time also have the longest working week, at more than 65 hours.

Although part-time work is often considered as a family-friendly measure that can help workers to balance working life with responsibilities outside work, the European Working

Conditions Survey suggests that the number of unpaid working hours is actually higher when women work part-time. Figure 3.4 shows that women appear to spread their household tasks over a longer period when working part-time. In other words, all other things being equal in terms of daily household chores, women working full-time concentrate their unpaid work into fewer hours. A substantial part of the unpaid working hours by women working part-time will however consist in time spent on caring for children. Certain domestic tasks may be outsourced. Obviously, women working full-time are more likely to seek help for domestic chores than those working part-time, which may partly explain the discrepancy.

What is more striking is the marginal difference in the length of unpaid working hours between full-time and part-time working men. While male full-time workers spend an average 8 hours a week on unpaid work, this figure was even lower for men working part-time: 7.2 hours.

**Figure 3.4:** Composite indicator on working hours, by full-time/ part-time hours and gender, EU-27, 2005



*Note:* The composite working hours indicator is made up of the figures for weekly working hours, plus the average weekly working hours in jobs other than the main job, commuting time and the total weekly unpaid working hours, declared by male and female workers aged 15 or more broken down by full-time and part-time work, 2005.

*Source:* EWCS.

It thus appears that despite the increasing participation of women in the labour force, the traditional division of domestic responsibilities between men and women persists. Domestic responsibilities, such as caring for children, housework or cooking are essentially assumed by women. Women's work and private life hence appears "balanced" in the sense that they devote comparable amounts of their time to both paid and unpaid work.

As shown in Table 3.1, which constitutes a subgroup of the composite indicator, the number of unpaid working hours is particularly high among women aged between 25 and 39 (31.8 weekly hours) and between 40 and 54 (26.9 hours), who are primarily concerned by family responsibilities. This figure was noticeably lower outside these two age categories, as a large share of young women (aged 24 or below) will still be in education or living in the parental home, whereas women aged 55 and over often live in households where children have left the house and domestic and caring tasks are less time-consuming.

In terms of age class, a similar pattern emerges for men, but in a wholly different order of magnitude, as male shares are lower by a factor of between 3 and 4. Indeed, it appears that men's work largely tends to be confined to their paid job, regardless of their age.

A different approach is used in Time Use Surveys (TUS), which are conducted by national statistical agencies and

research institutes in their respective countries. In a TUS, a representative sample of individuals keeps a diary of daily activities during one weekday and one weekend day of each week over one year. As this approach is substantially different, it will not be detailed here <sup>(2)</sup>.

**Table 3.1:** Unpaid weekly working hours, by gender and age , 2005

Age of respondent	Men	Women
24 years or younger	3.2	10.4
25-39 years	9.2	31.8
40-54 years	8.6	26.9
55 years or older	5.2	17.9

Note: Total weekly unpaid working hours (caring for children and adults and hours spent on housework), declared by male and female respondents aged 15 or over.

Source: EWCS.

<sup>(2)</sup> For more information, please refer to Statistics in Focus No. 4/2006 "How is time of women distributed in Europe" – [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=1073,46587259&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL&p\\_product\\_code=KS-NK-06-004](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1073,46587259&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&p_product_code=KS-NK-06-004)

More information on national time use surveys can be obtained through the following links:

**How women and men spend their time**

[http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-NK-03-012/EN/KS-NK-03-012-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-NK-03-012/EN/KS-NK-03-012-EN.PDF)

**How is the time of women and men distributed in Europe?**

[http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?\\_pageid=1073,46587259&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL&p\\_product\\_code=KS-NK-06-004](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/portal/page?_pageid=1073,46587259&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&p_product_code=KS-NK-06-004)

**How Europeans spend their time – Everyday life of women and men**

[http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-58-04-998/EN/KS-58-04-998-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-58-04-998/EN/KS-58-04-998-EN.PDF)

**The life of women and men in Europe – A statistical portrait - NEW EDITION**

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=1073,46587259&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL&p\\_product\\_code=KS-80-07-135](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1073,46587259&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&p_product_code=KS-80-07-135)

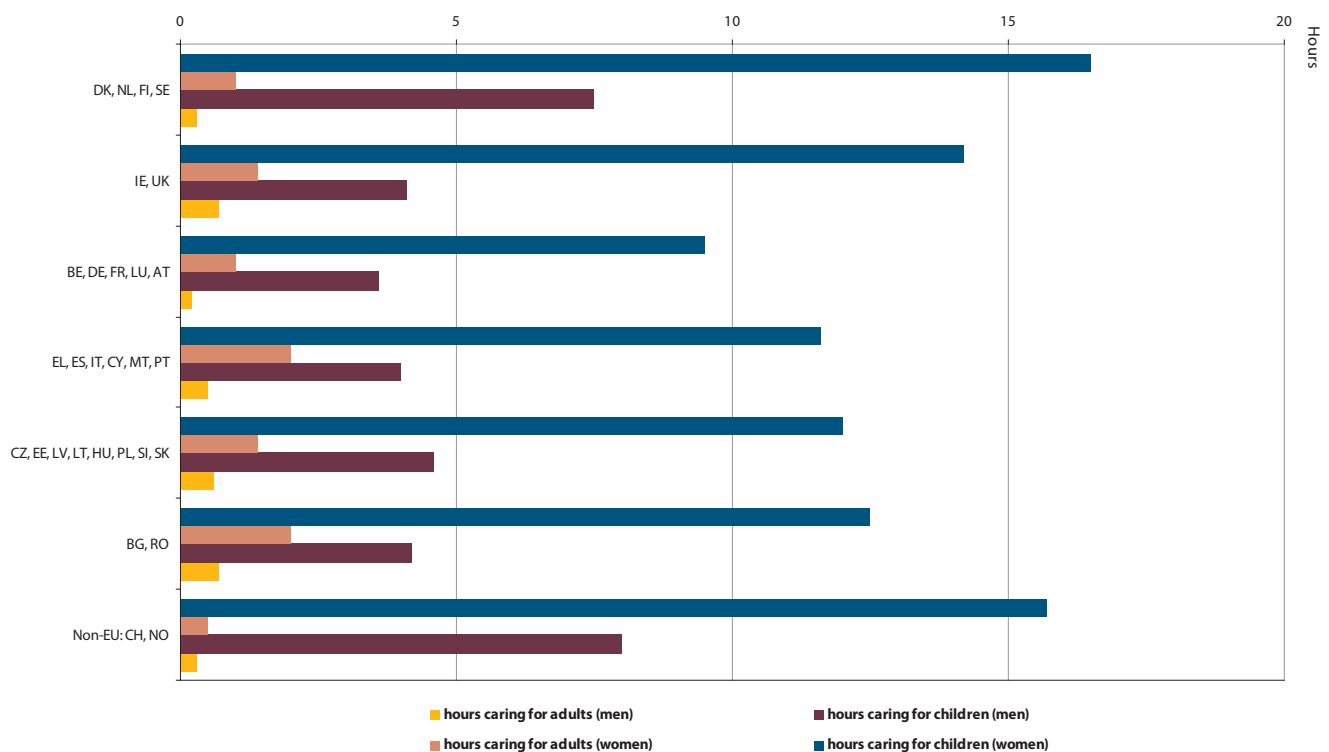
## Focus on caring

Caring for children and other dependents is very often the primary motivation in the decision to stop working for family reasons. It should be recalled that the analysis carried out in this subsection is limited to employed persons. Persons that are not in gainful employment and assume caring responsibilities are hence excluded, which can have a strong impact on the results.

It appears that a substantial share of unpaid working hours is spent on caring (both for adults and children). As for domestic work in general, there are significant differences in the gender distribution of the number of hours spent on caring: in the Netherlands, Nordic countries and Switzerland, the amount of time spent on caring is better shared between men and women than in Southern European and candidate countries; Eastern European countries fall somewhere in between.

Childcare is by and large assumed by women in all countries considered. Again based on country groupings with similar working patterns, it appears that women in the Nordic countries, the Netherlands and Switzerland spend the most time caring for their children (around 16 hours per week), which is double the amount of time spent by men on childcare (notably due to the duration of the paid parental leave schemes). However, men in these countries still excel when compared to other country groups, where men spend on average only 4 to 5 hours on childcare. In Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and Austria, men spent on average 3.6 hours caring for their children, while women spent 9.5 hours per week, but were still at the bottom of the ranking. The largest gender gap was noted in Ireland and the United Kingdom, where the time spent by women on childcare exceeded that of men by a factor of 3.5. In concrete terms, this translates into a difference of 10 hours per week between women (14.2 hours) and men (4.1 hours).

**Figure 3.5:** Hours spent caring for children and adults per week, by country group and gender



Note: Total weekly unpaid working hours declared by male and female workers aged 15 or more broken down by time spent caring for children and adults, 2005.

Source: EWCS.

Although overall far fewer hours are spent caring for adults than children, the amount of time devoted to caring for adults in southern European countries is considerably higher than in most other countries. For instance, Bulgarian and Romanian women spent twice as much time caring for adults (2 hours per week) than women in most western European and Nordic countries (1 hour). Albeit lower in absolute terms, a similar pattern can be observed for men: whereas men in Western Europe and Scandinavia spend 0.2 to 0.3 hours per week caring for adults, most southern and central European Member States registered between 0.5 and 0.7 hours a week. This is explained by the social and cultural situation in terms of caring for dependant adults in those countries who are mainly cared at home by their relatives and for whom care services are limited.

Indeed, while it is hard enough raising children with one or both parents pursuing a career, a growing number of families are also caring for ageing parents. Key elements to this development are the fact that people are living longer in

retirement, people are marrying and having children later in life, and the fastest-growing segment of the population comprises people well over retirement age.

The so-called “sandwich generation” families – middle-aged persons wedged between two dependent generations – are coping with the challenge of multi-generational care and are facing obligations for which public authorities sometimes provide insufficient or inadequate solutions.

An increasing number of families are being confronted with the question of how to manage and afford the long-term care needs of senior citizens. Long-term care often involves not only medical care or nursing home care (which account for just a fraction of long-term care needs), but also the vast array of support services that many ageing citizens need to maintain their independence at home. These services include everything from help with shopping and cleaning to help with taking medication or getting to the doctor’s appointment. Families are often shouldering a large share of these responsibilities on their own.



### 3.3 Satisfaction with the work–private life balance

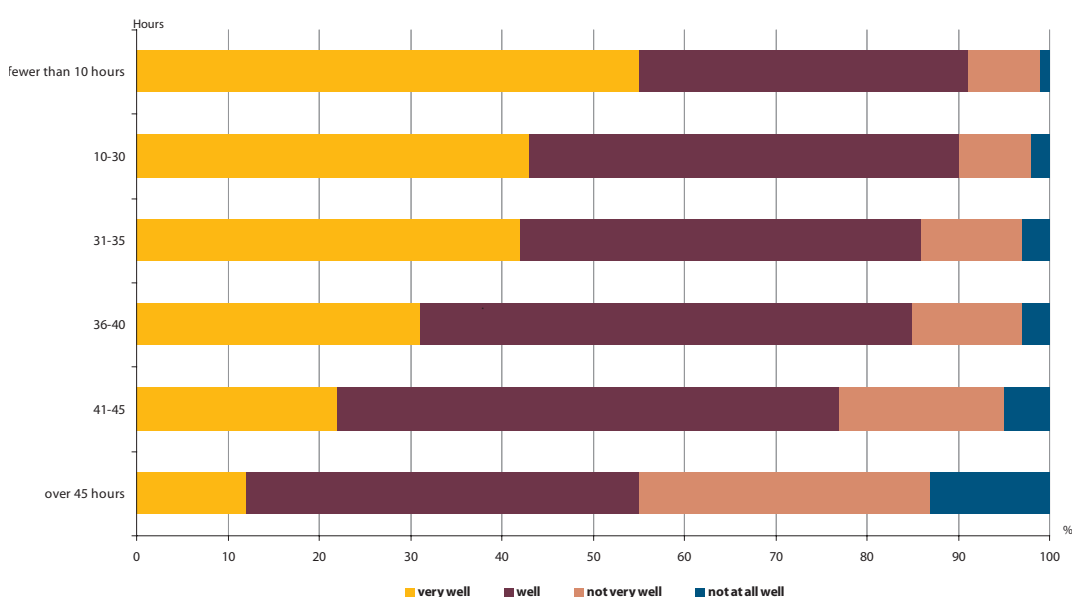
Respondents of the European Working Conditions Survey, which only takes account of persons in employment, were asked if their job ‘fits in with their family or social commitments outside work’ according to a four-point scale (‘very well’, ‘well’, ‘not so well’, ‘not at all well’). Four out of five European workers said they were satisfied with their situation and how their working arrangements fitted in with their non-work commitments <sup>(3)</sup>. However, as questions on satisfaction with work–private life balance tend to routinely elicit high levels of positive responses, the survey also included additional questions to provide further details on aspects linked to the work–private life balance.

One of the principal factors influencing the balance between work and private life is the volume of paid hours worked. The more hours a person works, the greater the difficulty in reconciling work and family and social commitments outside work. This is clearly reflected in Figure 3.6, where as much as 85% of persons working between 36 and 40 hours per week (considered as a full-time job) rated their work–private life balance as ‘very well’ or ‘well’. This share stood at 77% for those working 41 to 45 hours a week, whereas it dropped to 55% for those working 45 hours or more.

<sup>(3)</sup> See also the recent Eurobarometer survey on ‘Family life and the needs of an ageing population’ (Flash Eurobarometer 247, October 2008), which partly treats this topic.

**Figure 3.6:** Perception of the work–private life balance, by length of working week, EU 27, 2005 (%)

*Employed persons aged 15 or above*



Source: EWCS.

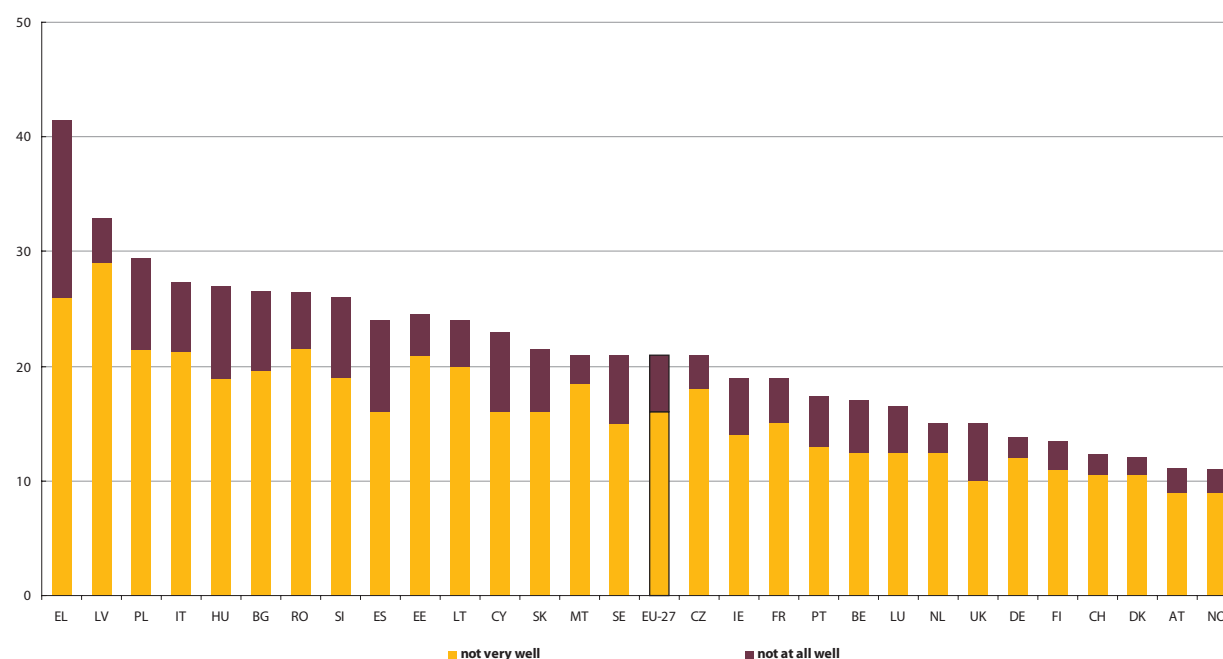
Similarly, the share of persons who rated their work–private life balance as ‘not very well’ or ‘not at all well’ increased with the number of hours worked in a week. This pattern was amplified considerably when the working week exceeds 45 hours: 32% of workers rated their work–private life balance as ‘not very well’ (against 18% for those working 41 to 45 hours a week); and 13% rated it as ‘not at all well’ (against 5% for those working 41 to 45 hours a week).

There were considerable variations across countries for respondents who considered their work–private life balance as ‘not very well’ or ‘not at all well’, from a low 11% dissatisfaction rate in Norway and Austria to over 40% in Greece, double the EU-27 average (21%).

At country level, there seems to be a correlation between the number of hours worked (in the main job) and the level of dissatisfaction with the work–private life balance. Countries with long average working hours tend to register relatively high dissatisfaction rates, but there are exceptions: Latvia for instance, with a similar volume of working hours in the main job as Slovenia or the Czech Republic, reported far higher shares of persons who were unhappy with their current situation (Latvia reported 33%, against 26% in Slovenia and 21% in the Czech Republic). In the EU-27 as a whole, where the average working week amounted to 39 hours, 21% of respondents were unsatisfied with their work–private life balance. Conversely, the remaining 79% were satisfied with their current situation.

**Figure 3.7:** Perception of the work–private life balance, by country, 2005 (%)

*Employed persons aged 15 or above*



Source: EWCS.

Given the assumption that working women remain disproportionately involved in unpaid domestic and caring activities – an assumption supported by evidence from the survey – a key focus in the work–private life balance debate remains the specific pressures on working women. Based on results from the EWCS, it is interesting to note that men report more dissatisfaction with their work–private life balance than women. The main factors contributing to this unexpected outcome are, however, the volume of weekly working hours and the different ways in which working hours are organised between men and women<sup>(4)</sup>. As a rule,

part-time workers are twice as likely as full-time workers to have a positive perception of their work–private life balance. The high incidence of part-time work among women and the low incidence of part-time work among men are therefore key factors in explaining the levels of satisfaction with work–life balance among working men and women. However, even among both sexes working full-time, a somewhat higher proportion of men (24% for men against 20% for women – data not shown) have a negative perception of their work–private life balance.

<sup>(4)</sup> See Report on the Fourth European Working Conditions Survey, Chapter 9 — <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/docs/ewcs/4EWCS/ef0698/chapter9.pdf>



## Family responsibilities and care services





## 4.1 Childcare services

Early childhood education and care differ substantially across countries. First, opinions diverge as to the optimal age at which children's socialisation should begin. Secondly, countries also differ in the way childcare responsibilities are shared between the domestic, public and private spheres.

As far as outside childcare options are concerned, countries have generally implemented a dual system:

- Collective childcare systems (crèches, kindergartens, nursery-schools, play-schools): these are public or private reception facilities with skilled staff providing care for young children during the day;
- Subsidised professional child minders who receive children at their home (family day-care).

Moreover, most countries distinguish between two periods of pre-primary care and education, an earlier period that is more related to care (from birth until the child's third birthday) and a later one with a larger educational component (from three years of age until the age at which compulsory education starts).

The Barcelona European Council of March 2002 put forward the improvement of childcare provisions as an important

instrument within the set of active policies aimed at full employment<sup>(1)</sup>. The Council acknowledged the need to improve public and private childcare provision in order to increase female participation rates. Moreover, accessible and high-quality childcare is considered of prime importance to enhance social inclusion of all vulnerable groups. Two specific targets were adopted:

*By 2010, Member States should provide care facilities to cover, first, at least 90 per cent of children aged between three and the age at which compulsory schooling begins and, second, at least 33 per cent of children below three years of age. These objectives have appealed to governments to substantially improve their childcare systems.*

This chapter provides an overview of a comprehensive set of relevant childcare characteristics as well as a comparison of all EU-27 Member States and EFTA countries when available. However, issues relating to regional heterogeneity remain given that the data available are not sufficiently disaggregated. Indeed, in most countries, local communities play an important role in the provision of childcare, which often leads to a high degree of diversity within countries.

<sup>(1)</sup> For details see [http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/71025.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/71025.pdf)

### 4.1.1 Provision and organisation of childcare services

This section first provides an overview of the structure and typology of childcare services and facilities in individual countries, followed by a presentation of quantitative information on the use of such childcare services.

According to the OECD<sup>(2)</sup>, three main categories of formal care or education structures can be distinguished based on age and educational content (Table 4.1). The first category comprises a wide range of arrangements targeted at children of the youngest age group (mostly from birth up to the child's third birthday) such as day-care centres, playgroups, and nurseries, all of which put the emphasis on care (as opposed to education) and allow parents to work. These structures can be largely managed by private stakeholders but publicly and privately financed (the Czech Republic, Ireland, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, the UK and Switzerland) or largely publicly funded and managed (all remaining countries). A second group includes all non-school

education-oriented settings, mostly for preschoolers, that is children between three years of age and the age at which they enter compulsory schooling. Finally, the third category corresponds to schools, which are institutionalised care structures as such.

The typology table (Table 4.1) shows that Hungary, the Netherlands and the UK are the countries with the lowest age to start statutory education: compulsory enrolment starts at five years of age in the form of a pre-primary curriculum.

In most European countries the age of compulsory schooling coincides with entry into primary education (usually six years of age). The same is true for the Nordic countries and Poland but at the age of seven. In Ireland, the UK and the Netherlands, primary school starts at the age of four, while compulsory schooling begins at six in Ireland and at five years of age in the UK and the Netherlands.

<sup>(2)</sup> OECD family database, available online at [www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database](http://www.oecd.org/els/social/family/database)



**Table 4.1:** Typology of childcare and early education services

	Centre based care		Family day care		Pre-school		Compulsory school	
Public <sup>(1)</sup>								
Private <sup>(2)</sup>								
Age	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
BE	Kinderdagverblijf , (centre-based crèches) and FDC. Crèches (centre-based) and gardiennes encadrées (FDC)			Kleuterschool, part-time or full-time, with out-of-school-hours care; Ecole maternelle, part-time or full-time, with out-of-school-hours care			Compulsory schooling	
CZ	Crèche (centre-based care), FT			Materska skola (state kindergarten)			Compulsory schooling	
DK	Dagpleje (FDC) and Vuggestuer (creche) full-time (>32 hrs)			Børnehaver (kindergarten) full-time (>32hrs)				Compulsory schooling
	Adlersintegrer (age-integrated facility) full-time (>32 hrs)						Børne-haver (>32hrs)	
DE	Krippen (centre-based creche)			Kindergarten (pre-school)			Compulsory schooling	
IE	Regulated FDC and nurseries (centre-based)				Early Start and Infant school (pre-school), with primary school		Compulsory schooling	
			Pre-school playgroups					
EL	Vrefonipiakoi stathmoi (crèche for children <2.5 and nursery school for >2.5)						Compulsory schooling	
				Nipiagogeia (kindergarten)				
ES	Educacion pre-scolar (Center based)			Educacion infantil (Pre-school), with primary school			Compulsory schooling	
FR	Crèche (centre-based care) and Assistant maternelles (FDC), FT			Ecole maternelle (pre-school)			Compulsory schooling	
IT	Asili nidi (creches) part-time (20hrs) and full-time (<50hrs)			Scuola dell'infanzia (pre-school)			Compulsory schooling	
LU	Crèche (centre-based care) and Tagesmutter (FDC)			Enseignement pre-scolaire (pre-school)			Compulsory schooling	
HU	Bölcsode (creches), full-time (40hrs)			Ovoda (kindergarten)		Compulsory schooling		
NL	Gastouderopvang (FDC), Kinderopvang (child care centres) and Playgroups				Group 1, with primary school	Compulsory schooling (group 2 onwards)		
AT	Tagesmutter (FDC) and Krippen (centre-based). Part-time (25hrs)			Kindergarten, (part-time, 25hrs). Out of school care provision under development.			Compulsory schooling	
PL	Nurseries			Pre-school/Nursery schools				Compulsory schooling
PT	Creche familiar (FDC) and centre-based creches			Jardins de infancia (pre-school)				Compulsory schooling
SK	Nursery schools			Kindergarten				Compulsory schooling
FI	Perhepäivähoito (FDC) and Paivakoti (municipal early development centres), full-time (>50hrs)						Esiopetus pre-school	Compulsory schooling
SE	Förskola (pre-school) full-time, 30 hours, some Familjedaghem (FDC) particularly in rural areas.						Förskoleklass (preschool, PT)	Compulsory schooling
UK	Nurseries, child minders and playgroups			Playgroups and nurseries, PT	Reception class, with primary school	Compulsory schooling		
IS	Day-care centres and 'day mothers' (FDC)			Pre-school				Compulsory schooling
NO	Barnehage, including rural familiebarnehager, full-time (40hrs)						Compulsory schooling	
CH	Crèche. Krippen, varies across cantons (centre-based)			Pre-school, mandatory in some cantons.			Compulsory schooling	

Notes: Situation as of 18.01.2007

(1) Provision is largely publicly funded and managed (more than 50% of enrolments are in publicly operated facilities).

(2) Provision is largely managed by private stakeholders (both for-profit and not-for-profit providers) and is publicly and privately financed.

Source: OECD.

Following the analysis of the organisation of formal childcare facilities, this section will focus on their use. There are only very few sources that actually quantify the use of childcare facilities across Europe in a comparable way. The most appropriate source appears to be the Community Statistics on

Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), which provide not only a source of information on the use of formal childcare services, but also on other types of arrangements. The box below details the overall aim of the EU-SILC and describes the survey's variables that are of interest here.

## EU-SILC data

EU-SILC (Community Statistics on Income and Living Conditions) is an instrument aiming at collecting timely and comparable cross sectional and longitudinal multidimensional micro data on income poverty and social exclusion. This instrument is anchored in the European Statistical System (ESS).

EU-SILC was launched in 2004 in 13 Member States. It reached its full scale extension with the 25 Member States, Norway and Iceland in 2005. Later it will be completed with data stemming from Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria and Switzerland.

The instrument aims to provide two types of data:

- Cross-sectional data pertaining to a given time or a certain time period with variables on income, poverty, social exclusion and other living conditions, and
- Longitudinal data pertaining to individual-level changes over time, generally observed periodically over a four-year period.

The reference population of EU-SILC is all private households and their current members residing in the territory of the Member State at the time of data collection.

In the framework of this publication, the survey's childcare services variables distinguishing formal care and other types of arrangements are of particular interest, the reference period being a typical (usual) week from January to June of the year of the survey.

**FORMAL CARE** covers the following services:

### ***Education at pre-school***

Pre-school or equivalent (e.g. kindergarten, nursery school, etc.). The educational classification used is ISCED Level 0. Special pre-schools or equivalents for children who have special needs (handicapped, etc.) are included as far as they are considered as pre-school (level 0).

### ***Education at compulsory school***

"Compulsory" school shall be understood as a mean to separate school from pre-school, but all the school hours have to be included.

### ***Child care at centre-based services***

This variable concerns only the children who are at pre-school or at school in the childcare reference period. Centre-based services outside (pre-) school hours should report the hours of care only before and after school. The services can be or not at the school place.

### ***Child care at day-care centre***

Includes all kinds of care organised/controlled by a structure (public, private). The place of the care can be a centre or the carer's home (e.g. organised family care). The care can be full time or part time, even for few hours. Special day-care of children with special needs are included.

**OTHER TYPES OF ARRANGEMENTS** include:

***Child care by a professional childminder at child's home or at childminder's home*** covers direct arrangements between the carer and the parents, who are often employers and pay the carer directly. "Professional" childminder denotes a person for whom looking after a child represents a job or paid activity, including baby sitters and au pairs. The care can be provided either at the child's home or at the childminder's home.

***Child care by grand-parents, others household members (aside from parents), other relatives, friends or neighbours*** refers to unpaid care (informal arrangements on an unpaid basis such as exchange of services). The care can be provided at the child's home or at the home of the relative, friend or neighbour.

For more information please see:

<http://forum.europa.eu.int/Public/irc/dsis/eusilc/library>





As explained hereafter, various indicators are used to evaluate the childcare system. They can each be broken down by age group: 0–2 years of age and 3 years of age until entry into the compulsory schooling system.

First, there is what is commonly denoted as the “coverage rate”: it measures the proportion of children of a given age group receiving some form of formal childcare. Coverage rates can be computed on the demand-side by looking at the use of formal arrangements.

A second indicator is “daily coverage”: this refers to the spread of opening hours of formal childcare arrangements. If a system is intended to adapt to parents’ working hours, childcare centres and other care provisions are expected to offer continuous service covering the entire working day, or in other words, without interruptions at noon and continuing beyond usual working hours in order to allow parents enough time to commute.

Finally, a third element denotes the “affordability” of childcare. It measures public commitment to offer affordable childcare and how the cost of childcare is shared between public funds and parent or employer contributions.

In terms of coverage rate, Table 4.2 shows the proportion of children using childcare services. A difference is made between formal care and other types of arrangements. It should be noted that these are not mutually exclusive, as children can both be in formal care and use other types of arrangements.

It appears that at EU-25 level, 26% of all children in the age group 0–2 received at least one hour of formal care in 2006 (see details in the box above). This share logically increases with age, up to 84% from the age of 3 to mandatory school age (typically kindergarten or pre-school), and logically close to 100% for children between mandatory school age and the age of 12<sup>(3)</sup>.

However, significant discrepancies were registered at country level: in the youngest age category, the share of children in formal care was comparatively high in the Scandinavian countries, especially in Denmark (73%), but also in the Netherlands (45%) and Belgium (40%). Conversely, less than 5% of infants were in formal care in the Czech Republic, Poland, Lithuania and Austria<sup>(4)</sup>.

However, this situation changes for the ‘3 to mandatory school age’ category, with shares of 90% or more registered in eight countries. As for the youngest age category, formal care remains very limited in Poland (28% of all children in this age class).

Other types of arrangement in childcare are slightly more common or could be used in combination with formal care. In 2006, 29% of all children in the EU-25 aged 0 to 2 received

informal care (from grandparents, relatives, neighbours or a professional childminder) for at least one hour per week. However, significant variations were registered at country level: low values were registered in the Scandinavian countries, where formal care for the very young is generally well developed; in contrast comparatively high values were generally noted in southern and eastern European countries, where formal care is less widespread, but where multi-generation households are more common. The use of informal childcare services in the Netherlands (56%) was comparatively high, where part-time employment is very common (especially among women) and many parents appear to have recourse to informal arrangements for at least part of the day.

**Table 4.2:** Use of formal childcare services and other types of childcare arrangements, 2006

*Percentage of the population of each age group*

Age	Formal care		Other types of arrangement	
	0-2	3- mand	0-2	3- mand
<b>EU-25</b>	26 (p)	84 (p)	29 (p)	26 (p)
<b>EU-15</b>	29 (p)	90 (p)	28 (p)	24 (p)
<b>BE</b>	40 (p)	98 (p)	30 (p)	32 (p)
<b>CZ</b>	2 (u)	67	20	22
<b>DK</b>	73	96	1 (u)	: (u)
<b>DE</b>	18 (p)	93 (p)	7 (p)	3 (p)
<b>EE</b>	18 (u)	85	32	25
<b>IE</b>	18 (p)	93 (p)	36 (p)	34 (p)
<b>EL</b>	10 (p)	61 (p)	54 (p)	40 (p)
<b>ES</b>	39	91	26	16
<b>FR</b>	31 (p)	94 (p)	29 (p)	27 (p)
<b>IT</b>	26	90	35	36
<b>CY</b>	25 (u)	87	57	44
<b>LV</b>	16 (p)	60 (p)	14 (p)	13 (p)
<b>LT</b>	4 (p)	56 (p)	21 (p)	13 (p)
<b>LU</b>	31	58	41	42 (u)
<b>HU</b>	8 (u)	79	48	51
<b>MT</b>	8 (u)	57	16 (u)	13 (u)
<b>NL</b>	45	89	56	52
<b>AT</b>	4 (u)	71	36	37
<b>PL</b>	2 (p)	28 (p)	36 (p)	36 (p)
<b>PT</b>	33 (p)	75 (p)	46 (p)	31 (p)
<b>SI</b>	29	81	60	60
<b>SK</b>	5 (p)	73 (p)	23 (p)	26 (p)
<b>FI</b>	26	77	5 (u)	5 (u)
<b>SE</b>	44	92	4 (u)	4 (u)
<b>UK</b>	33 (p)	89 (p)	39 (p)	38 (p)
<b>IS</b>	34	97	22	2 (u)
<b>NO</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)

Notes: (p) provisional value, (u) unreliable/uncertain data, : (u) extremely unreliable data. — Age groups: 0–2: from birth until the child's third birthday; 3-mand: from three years of age until the age at which mandatory education starts.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC 2006 data.

<sup>(3)</sup> Data for this age category not shown.

<sup>(4)</sup> Although certain figures are either provisional or uncertain.

The complementary nature of informal childcare becomes obvious when looking at the other age categories. Proportions shown are indeed influenced by (pre-) school systems in the respective countries and by working hours of parents. When a formal care solution does not cover the necessary time to allow for the parents' employment, informal types of arrangements will be sought to cover the remaining time gap. For children in the age group 'mandatory school age to 12 years old', proportions obviously reach 100% (data for this age class are not shown).

Very low proportions were noted in Sweden and Finland, suggesting that formal childcare services are well adapted to the constraints of working life. Higher proportions were again noted in southern and eastern European countries, especially in Slovenia.

### 4.1.2 Use of formal childcare services

Focusing on formal childcare services only, EU-SILC data make it possible to distinguish between children receiving formal care on a part-time basis (between one and 29 hours) and those attending formal care facilities for 30 hours or more each week.

For infants aged between 0 and 2 years old, Tables 4.3a and 4.3b reveal that few countries registered a clear preference for part-time care. Considering the fairly large availability of more flexible working time arrangements, these countries include the Netherlands, Ireland and the UK. Many other countries registered high shares of 0–2-year-olds in formal care for more than 30 hours a week, including Denmark, Portugal, Slovenia, Finland and Iceland.

**Table 4.3a:** Use of formal childcare services, 2006

*Percentage of the population of each age group*

Hours	0-2		3- mand	
	1-29	30+	1-29	30+
<b>EU-25</b>	14 (p)	12 (p)	44 (p)	40 (p)
<b>EU-15</b>	16 (p)	13 (p)	49 (p)	41 (p)
<b>BE</b>	17 (p)	23 (p)	36 (p)	62 (p)
<b>CZ</b>	1 (u)	1 (u)	28	39
<b>DK</b>	7 (u)	66	16	80
<b>DE</b>	11 (p)	7 (p)	66 (p)	27 (p)
<b>EE</b>	6 (u)	12 (u)	7 (u)	78
<b>IE</b>	13 (p)	5 (p)	80 (p)	13 (p)
<b>EL</b>	2 (p)	8 (p)	41 (p)	20 (p)
<b>ES</b>	20	19	47	44
<b>FR</b>	14 (p)	17 (p)	52 (p)	42 (p)
<b>IT</b>	10	16	24	66
<b>CY</b>	7 (u)	18 (u)	50	37
<b>LV</b>	2 (p)	14 (p)	4 (p)	56 (p)
<b>LT</b>	0 (p)	4 (p)	9 (p)	47 (p)
<b>LU</b>	14	17	42	16 (u)
<b>HU</b>	2 (u)	6 (u)	21	58
<b>MT</b>	5 (u)	3 (u)	32	25 (u)
<b>NL</b>	41	4 (u)	82	7
<b>AT</b>	3 (u)	1 (u)	55	16
<b>PL</b>	0 (p)	2 (p)	7 (p)	21 (p)
<b>PT</b>	1 (p)	32 (p)	9 (p)	66 (p)
<b>SI</b>	3 (u)	26	15	66
<b>SK</b>	1 (p)	4 (p)	10 (p)	63 (p)
<b>FI</b>	5 (u)	21	21	56
<b>SE</b>	17	27	34	58
<b>UK</b>	28 (p)	5 (p)	65 (p)	24 (p)
<b>IS</b>	3 (u)	31	13 (u)	84
<b>NO</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)

Notes: (p) provisional value, (u) unreliable/uncertain data, : (u) extremely unreliable data. — Age groups: 0–2: from birth until the child's third birthday; 3-mand: from three years of age until the age at which mandatory education starts.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC 2006 data.



As for infants aged 0–2 years old, the use of part-time care for children aged between three and compulsory school age (preschoolers) is particularly widespread in the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland. To these countries should be added Germany and Austria, where part-time work is also relatively common. In France, Cyprus, Malta and Greece, preschoolers are more often in part-time care, but the share of full-time users is also worthy of mention (unlike in the previous countries). As a result, the average number of formal care hours used by preschoolers is slightly higher in these countries than in the Netherlands, the UK and Ireland. Conversely, in Denmark, Iceland, Portugal, the Baltic States, Slovenia and Slovakia, parents more often tend to put their children in full-time care. In Hungary, the Czech Republic, Italy, Finland, Belgium, Sweden and Norway, formal care is most often used on a full-time basis, but the share of children in part-time care is also significant. Spain registered a balanced share of preschoolers in full-time and part-time care, whereas the UK and particularly Malta, registered high shares of preschoolers in part-time care.

The average number of weekly hours in formal care in 2006 is shown in Table 4.3b. Among the youngest group, the EU average of 25 hours of weekly care is by far exceeded in Latvia and Lithuania (around 40 hours), but also in Poland (38 hours) and Portugal (38 hours), whereas the average length of formal care was lowest in the Netherlands (16 hours) and the United Kingdom (14 hours). These countries were also identified in the case of preschoolers. As can be expected, the time gap among the school-going children is far less wide: the longest average duration of weekly care is noted in Portugal and Sweden (35 and 35 hours respectively) while in Germany and Finland this was around 10 hours less.

**Table 4.3b:** Average number of weekly hours of formal childcare, by age group, 2006

Age	0-2	3- mand	mand- 12
<b>EU-25</b>	25.0 (p)	27.3 (p)	29.5 (p)
<b>EU-15</b>	24.7 (p)	26.6 (p)	29.5 (p)
<b>BE</b>	30.3 (p)	30.4 (p)	31.3 (p)
<b>CZ</b>	:	29.4	28.4
<b>DK</b>	34.1	33.5	32.6
<b>DE</b>	22.0 (p)	22.9 (p)	25.4 (p)
<b>EE</b>	34.0	38.4	27.6
<b>IE</b>	20.1 (p)	22.1 (p)	27.9 (p)
<b>EL</b>	33.8 (p)	25.8 (p)	27.8 (p)
<b>ES</b>	27.0	29.2	30.0
<b>FR</b>	28.4 (p)	27.9 (p)	30.6 (p)
<b>IT</b>	30.9	32.3	33.1
<b>CY</b>	32.9	29.8	29.3
<b>LV</b>	40.2 (p)	39.7 (p)	33.4 (p)
<b>LT</b>	39.9 (p)	38.9 (p)	26.6 (p)
<b>LU</b>	29.9	21.7	28.4
<b>HU</b>	31.3 (u)	33.4	33.7
<b>MT</b>	:	25.2	30.5
<b>NL</b>	15.8	18.6	26.3
<b>AT</b>	:	23.1	27.5
<b>PL</b>	37.7 (p)	33.8 (p)	28.0 (p)
<b>PT</b>	37.8 (p)	36.8 (p)	35.3 (p)
<b>SI</b>	36.1	33.8	30.4
<b>SK</b>	:	35.2 (p)	30.7 (p)
<b>FI</b>	34.8	33.5	25.5
<b>SE</b>	29.0	30.7	35.2
<b>UK</b>	14.4 (p)	18.4 (p)	29.0 (p)
<b>IS</b>	36.6	36.4	31.5
<b>NO</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)

Notes: At least one hour of formal care per week — (p) provisional value, (u) unreliable/uncertain data, : (u) extremely unreliable data. — Age groups: 0-2: from birth until the child's third birthday; 3-mand: from three years of age until the age at which mandatory education starts; mand-12: from the age at which mandatory education starts until the child's 13th birthday.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC 2006 data.

### Opening hours of childcare facilities for infants and preschoolers

In practice, attendance of formal childcare facilities may be reduced due to limited opening hours, forcing parents to work shorter hours or to find other types of care solutions to complement formal care.

#### Opening hours of formal care facilities for infants

In most countries, formal childcare facilities for infants (0–2 years old) have long opening hours.

The French school system (nursery and primary schools) is known for its long hours. A typical school day in France begins at 8:30 until 16:30, with extra-curricular activities planned for the period between 16:30 and 18:00. There is no school on Wednesdays, but extra-curricular activities are as a rule also available.

In Belgium, subsidised care is provided for children aged 0–2 in the Flemish Community for at least 220 days a year, 11 hours a day between 6:30 and 18:30. In the French Community, most day-care arrangements are open 10 hours a day, also for 220 days a year (Meulders and O'Dorchai 2005, 2008). This is more or less compatible with a full-time working day, assuming that commuting time is not too high. However, parents working atypical hours (evenings, weekends, etc.) cannot turn to such care facilities.

As in Belgium, formal care facilities in Sweden are open for approximately 10–12 hours a day (Löfström 2005, Nyberg 2008).

Most crèches in Ireland open set hours from 7:30 or 8:00 to 18:00 or 18:30. However, as in Belgium, there are no childcare facilities operating during evenings, at night or weekends and the usual arrangements are unavailable during holidays (Barry, Tiernan and Conlon 2005, Barry and Sherlock 2008). Similarly, Hungarian childcare institutions are open between 7:00 and 17:30, but public childcare does not offer non-standard opening hours (Nagy 2005, Fazekas and Ozsvald 2008).

Nursery schools in Italy are open from 7:30 to 18:00 and children can attend in July if both parents work (Villa 2005). In Latvia, the majority of public childcare establishments operate five days a week, 12 hours per day, usually from 7:00 to 19:00. Kindergartens are generally closed for a summer break in July or August (Trapenciere 2005).

In Lithuania, more than 80% of children attend nurseries and kindergartens that are open all day long (Kanapiene 2005).

In Denmark there has been a decline in day-care centre opening hours, generally combined with a reduction in working hours. A typical Danish day-care centre used to have fairly long opening hours, but more recently, it appeared that only 7% of all day-care institutions close at 17:30 or later (Emerek 2005).

Norwegian institutions run by municipalities often have opening hours ranging from 7:00 or 7:30 to 17:00 (Ellingsæter 2005).

Most nurseries in the UK are open Monday to Friday between 8:00 and 18:00 (Fagan, Donnelly and Rubery 2005). In the Czech Republic, most facilities provide full day-care and operate from 6:00 or 6:30 to between 16:00 and 17:30.

Besides these countries where opening hours of childcare facilities are relatively long, at least on normal working days, two countries form a middle group with less accommodating opening times. In Slovenia, formal care centres are usually open for six to nine hours a day (Kanjuro-Mrčela 2005, 2008). In Luxembourg, most childcare structures are open eight hours a day (Plasman and Sissoko 2005).

In Cyprus, opening hours of childcare facilities are not fully compatible with full-time work hours in the private sector. Most day-care centres are open until 15:00 at the latest. It is very common for kindergartens and most community centres to close at 13:00 (Panayiotou 2005). A similar example is Greece, where public crèches and nurseries are open from 7:00 to 16:00 in the winter and from 6:45 to 16:00 in the summer, five days a week. Nurseries are closed one month in August, and two weeks at Christmas and Easter, while summer school holidays last three months (Karamessini 2005).

In a number of countries, parents rely on childcare facilities that are open for less than eight hours a day, meaning that one of them must work part-time, or they must find other solutions to cover the time between the closing time of the childcare facility and the time they get back from work.

For example, in Portugal, public childcare was until recently provided typically either in the morning or afternoon, during five hours, or alternatively in two shifts. Private childcare facilities offer some considerable advantages: they usually do not close during holidays and offer longer opening hours. In Germany, a high proportion of childcare facilities, especially kindergartens, operate part-time, sometimes only in the morning, sometimes with a closing time between noon and 14:00. In the western part of Germany, only a minority of childcare facilities offer full-time opening hours. Very few kindergartens are open on Saturdays, but almost half of them are open during school holidays.

#### Opening hours of formal care for preschoolers and primary school children

The figures on opening hours of facilities for pre-school children illustrate a more time-restricted scheme than for infants in most countries. Belgian nursery schools open for just seven hours a day. Spanish schools are open from 9:00 to 12:00 and 15:00 to 17:00, five days a week, 10 months per year. Some schools offer extra-curricular activities after school hours, most of them on a private basis (Molto 2005).



In Ireland, primary school pupils generally attend school between 9:00 and 13:00 for the first two years and from 9:00 to 14:00 for the following six years. In the UK, much of the pre-school expansion concerned part-time places for 3–4 year olds in state primary schools. These places are free of charge, but childcare is typically only provided mornings or afternoons during term-time. Some schools are able to offer full-time places, but the hours are usually shorter than those provided by day nurseries. Full-time, year round pre-school childcare services are expensive and in limited supply (Fagan, Donnelly and Rubery 2005).

There are however a few exceptions to the limited opening hours of formal care facilities. In 76 out of the 290 Swedish municipalities some pre-schools are open outside ordinary working hours (7:00–18:30) (Löfström 2005, Nyberg 2008). In Italy, kindergartens operate from 9:00 until 16:00. If both parents are working, service may be prolonged. This extra service is free, but it is available only to working parents. At primary school, classes often end in mid-afternoon (Villa 2005). In Portugal, pre-schools start 5 days earlier than primary schools, finish two weeks later, and have no holidays at Christmas and Easter. Only a few public schools are able to provide formal care outside school hours (Ferreira 2005).

### Affordability of childcare

Affordability refers to the price of childcare services. This price usually varies with the form of ownership for users of childcare institutions. Private childcare institutions are generally more expensive than public ones. The relatively high price of private arrangements as compared to public ones limits their accessibility, even for better-off parents.

In most countries, the cost of municipal childcare facilities is partly subsidised by state transfers (granted to the providers of services) whereas the remainder is financed by municipal budgets and parent fees. This is an important issue because when the price of public care is high, it may not make economic sense for low-income mothers to be employed. High income parents also face the cost issue but for them, it may be slightly different, determined rather in terms of flexibility and opening hours of nurseries.

Countries can apply different mechanisms to subsidise the market cost of childcare:

- First, they may subsidise childcare itself so that charges fall below market prices for all parents.
- Second, they may reduce or refund charges for childcare according to income, family type, age, or number of children in childcare
- Third, the extra costs of childcare in some countries are mitigated by higher cash benefits for a child of pre-school age as compared with a school-age child (Denmark, Netherlands, Luxembourg and Belgium) (Bradshaw and Finch 2002).
- Finally, countries may offset the market costs of childcare through income tax reductions.

In Sweden, childcare is financed by municipal taxes, state contributions, and to a much smaller extent by parent fees and special grants from the state (Löfström 2005, Nyberg 2008). As childcare is considered a public responsibility in Denmark as well, the major part of the cost of childcare is publicly funded, and parents pay at most 33% of the total cost (as of July 2005) (Emerek 2005). In Finland, client fees cover about 15% of the total day-care costs that are fixed according to a family's size and income level (Lehto 2005, Sutela 2008). In France, parent fees cover 28% of a place in a collective crèche and 29% of a place in a family crèche. However, the general trend is towards individualised forms of childcare (Silvera 2005, 2008). In Spain, more precisely in Madrid, one third of each childcare place is paid by the municipality, one third by the regional government and the remainder by parents (with parental fees fixed according to parents' income) (Molto 2005). The situation varies for the other Spanish regions. In Bulgaria, all-day childcare institutions are subsidised by the state to the amount of the wages of their staff. However, half-day and seasonal childcare institutions are financed entirely by municipal funds and parent fees (Beleva 2005). In Ireland, public subsidisation is very low (Barry, Tiernan and Conlon 2005, Barry and Sherlock 2008). In Italy public childcare for infants is only partly subsidised, therefore parents are required to pay fees; these are determined at the municipal level and are usually set according to total household income (and number of children). Childcare for children over three years of age is completely subsidised, and parents are only required to pay for some expenses (meals) (Villa 2005).

It should be noted that there are many country-specific and regional differences in the way the childcare system is funded and the final costs that are borne by parents. Cross-country comparisons as regards the cost of childcare to parents will be presented below. The idea is to shed light on the comparative expensiveness of childcare for parents across Europe.

The group of Nordic countries is not homogeneous. Whereas childcare is very affordable in Sweden, it weighs more heavily on parents' budget in Denmark and Norway. In Sweden, no one should pay more than 3% of their income for one child, 2% for a second child, 1% for a third and no fee at all for the fourth, fifth child, and so forth. Moreover, there is a ceiling on the size of the fee. Free universal pre-school was made available from 2003 to all four- and five-year-olds, irrespective of their parents' income, but out-of-school hours care is charged (Löfström 2005, Nyberg 2008).

In Denmark, parent fees are earnings-related and childcare is free for parents on low incomes. As in Austria, the income limit up to which fee reductions are applied is higher for parents with more than one child. Nevertheless, only single parents, parents still studying and parents on unemployment or other cash benefits normally have an income lower than the income limit applied for reduced payment for day-care.



In Bulgaria, parents pay monthly fees that vary with the number of children. The fee for a first child is roughly EUR 10 on average and EUR 5 for a second child (Beleva 2005).

For regular, full-day-care of a child at a public nursery in the Czech Republic the total monthly cost is usually EUR 80, and the cost in a “public” kindergarten is around EUR 40 (Křížková, Maríková & Dudová 2005, Křížková 2008).

Besides Denmark and Norway, a number of other European countries may be considered middle range cost countries. In Luxembourg, the average monthly cost for a child that is regularly cared for in a paid childcare structure is EUR 185 (Plasman and Sissoko 2005).

For children aged 0–2, in the Flemish Community of Belgium, parents paid on average EUR 12 for a full day's care in subsidised collective childcare in 2006. Parental fees are income-related and tax deductible until the child reaches 12 years of age. In the French Community, parents pay on average EUR 13.1 per day and per child. The cost of out-of-school-hours care is never income-related but some minimal and maximal amounts are set by law, at least for formal care arrangements.

In France, the level of household participation for a place in a crèche is determined by the CAF (Caisse d'Allocations Familiales) and is income-related. Typically, the hourly fee for a full-time place will amount to 0.06% of the average monthly net income of a household (0.05% with 2 children, 0.04% with 3 children). With a net household income of EUR 2 500 for instance, the fee would be EUR 225 a month for a typical full-time place (150 hours per month). There are incentives for those on low pay to use crèches, but there is a great shortage of places (especially in rural and outlying urban areas).

In Slovenia, in recent years, the average parental contribution has been around 25–30% of the cost, with variations according to the level of income per family member, family property and the number of children (Kanjuro-Mrčela 2005, 2008).

In Greece, a progressive income-related scale is generally applied. The monthly fees in public and private crèches and nurseries range between EUR 250 and EUR 420 (Karamessini 2005).

In Spain, education for children aged 4–5 is free, while childcare / education for children aged 0–3 is subsidised for low-income families only (Molto 2005).

In Portugal, public services are free of charge but limited in supply. Registered childminders are the most common form of child-care used by low-wage employees. They offer longer and more flexible hours, and the price is often less than half that at a private crèche (Ferreira 2005).

In Italy, public nursery schools are organised at the municipal level. Low fees (around EUR 100 per month) apply only to poor households, average fees (EUR 200–300) to low income households, and high fees (EUR 400–600) to households with a total income above the average (Villa 2005).

In some countries childcare costs, even when subsidised, absorb a large part of parents' budgets, which can act as a disincentive to turn to formal childcare. Such countries include for example the Netherlands, Cyprus and Ireland, but foremost the UK. In the Netherlands, parents pay an income-related fee that can rise to 66% of the bill for higher income groups, absorbing as much as 40 to 70% of the income of a secondary earner (based on a part-time job for 3 days a week and three days of childcare) (Plantenga 2005). In Cyprus, the typical cost of a place in private day-care is around EUR 205 per month and per child. In a state or community centre fees are in the range of EUR 105–120, with the minimum wage at about EUR 600, and public care unavailable in many instances. Cyprus is a case in point where it does not make much sense for low-income mothers to be in paid work. Other arrangements such as nannies or licensed childminders are even more costly (Panayiotou 2005).

The high cost of childcare has also been found to have created a definite barrier to accessing paid employment, education and training in Ireland (Barry, Tiernan and Conlon 2005, Barry and Sherlock 2008).

The situation is even more difficult in the UK. Parents are the main contributors to the costs of early childcare (public), paying between 75–93% of the cost, with the government paying most of the rest plus a small contribution from employers. The average cost of a full-time nursery place in England for a child under two is EUR 720 per month (roughly equivalent to the average weekly wage of a woman employed part-time)<sup>(5)</sup> (Fagan, Donnelly and Rubery 2005). Of note is that in Ireland and the UK, public childcare facilities play a negligible role compared with private care solutions.

<sup>(5)</sup> Note that the UK government has increased subsidies for some low-income employed parents via the new childcare tax credit (CCTC). The CCTC means that those in low-paid employment can offset a proportion or all childcare costs up to a ceiling against tax payable on income. This tax/benefit in respect of childcare costs in the UK is the only subsidy that exists; it is limited to formal childcare services and has a fixed upper limit regardless of the number of children using childcare.



### 4.1.3 Quality of childcare and early education services

Several studies have dealt with the issue of evaluating the quality of childcare provision (Fiene 2002, Kamerman 2001). A range of indicators have been agreed upon to assess the different aspects of childcare quality. These roughly consist of health safeguards, educational content of care and security as well as children's safety. In this chapter the focus is on child/staff ratios and childcare workers' qualifications.

#### Child/staff ratios

Most countries have set requirements specifying a maximum number of children that can be placed under the responsibility of one adult, especially in pre-primary education. This is not the case in Belgium, France, Denmark, the Netherlands and Sweden, where such limits are not established at a central level. In other countries, this upper threshold varies between seven in Finland and up to 30 in Ireland and Greece. Most countries impose a ratio of 25 children per carer/teacher (Eurydice 2005).

As far as the ideal ratio between staff and children is concerned, it is generally agreed to amount to around three or four infants per carer in centres (crèches or family day-care centres) and two staff members per group (Fiene 2002). For

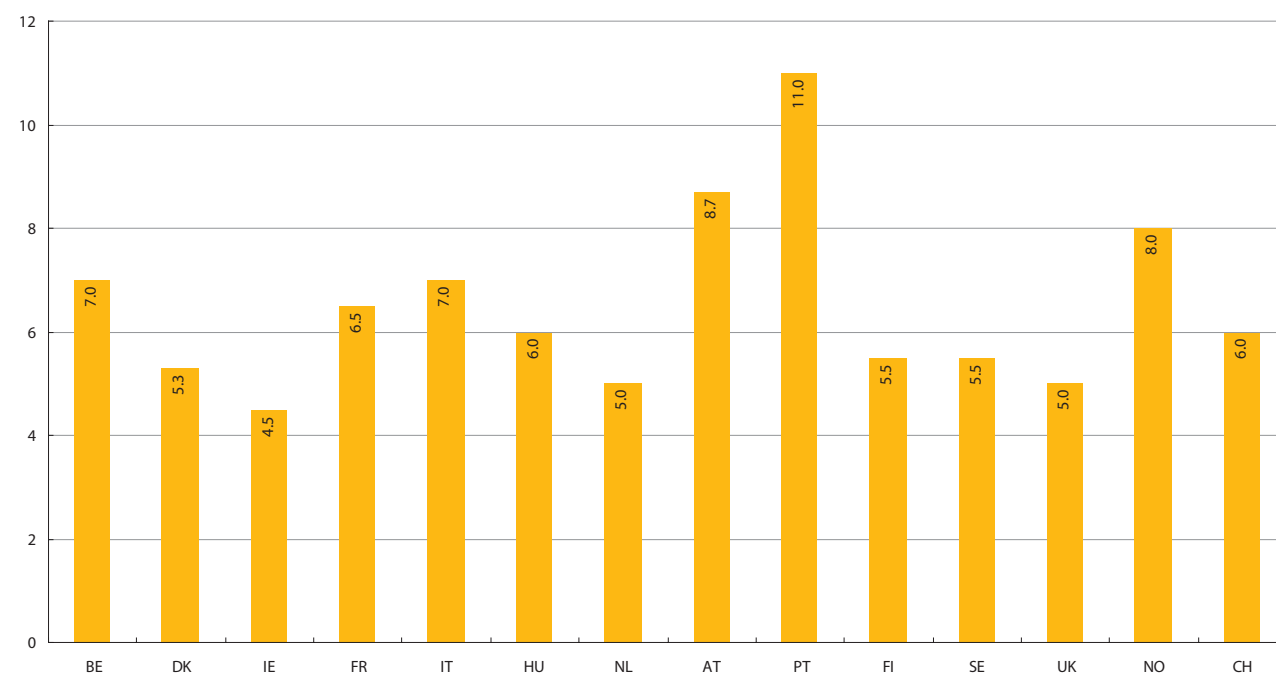
preschoolers, this ratio increases to eight children per carer/teacher but still remains much lower than the maximum legal limit set by most European countries.

Figures 4.1 (comprising 14 countries) and 4.2 (comprising 18 countries) show that for infants aged 0–3, the child/staff ratios across Europe are much lower than for preschoolers<sup>(6)</sup>. For infants, this ratio ranges between 4.5 and 11 children per childminder (in most countries it stands between 5 and 7); while for preschoolers the spread is much wider, covering from as few as 7 to as many as 18.6 children per carer/teacher (on average about 14–15 children per contact staff). This difference in density is reflected in the price of pre-primary care. Indeed, as mentioned above, childcare for 0–3-year-olds is much more costly than for children aged between three and the age at which compulsory school starts.

Considering 0–3-year-olds, child/staff ratios in formal day-care are very high in Norway, Austria and especially Portugal. In contrast, the lowest ratios are observed in Ireland, the UK and the Netherlands. As far as preschoolers are concerned, the UK presents one of the highest ratios, in the same range as France, Switzerland, and again Austria and Portugal.

<sup>(6)</sup> Data is taken from the on-line OECD Family database on family outcomes and family policies.

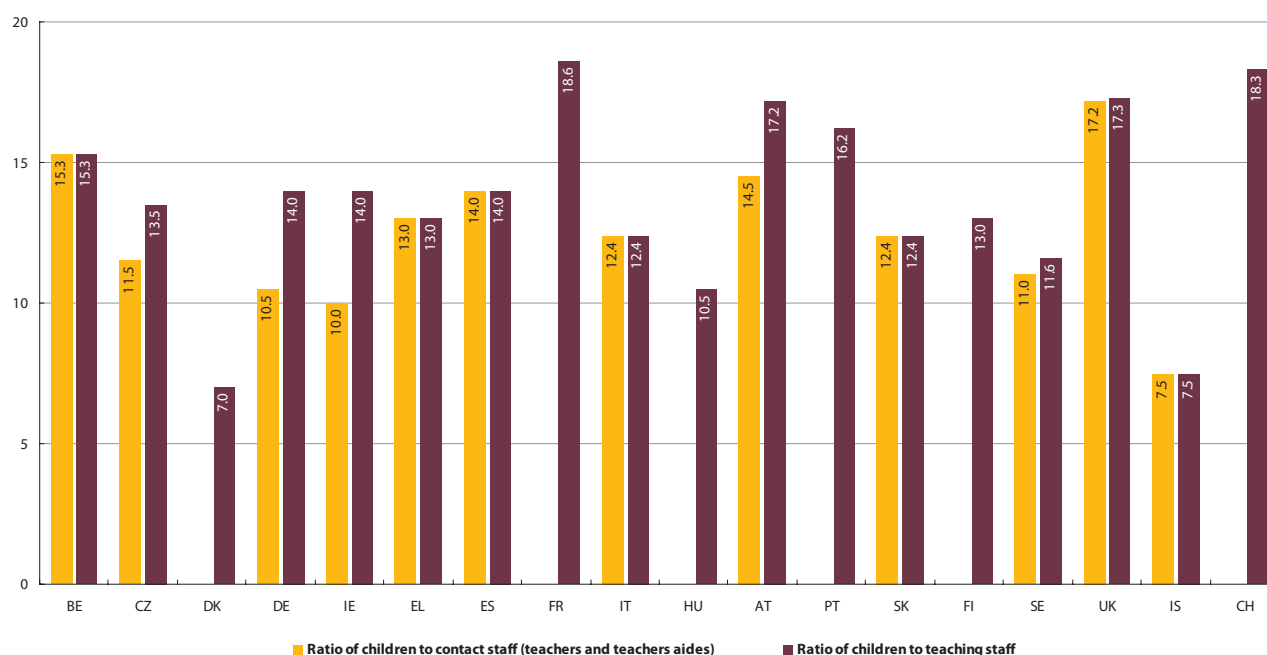
**Figure 4.1:** Child-to-staff ratios in formal day-care services, average for 0–3-year-olds



Note: This graph shows the average child-to-carer/educator ratio for children not yet 4 years of age who attend licensed day-care facilities, situation as of 18.01.2007.

Source: OECD.



**Figure 4.2:** Child-to-staff ratios in pre-schools

Note: For children attending pre-school, certified teacher-to-child ratios are calculated by dividing the number of full-time equivalent children enrolled in pre-school programmes by the number of full-time equivalent teachers at that level. Where information is available, the ratio of contact staff (teachers and classroom and teacher assistants) is also shown, situation as of 18.01.2007.

Source: OECD.

### Qualifications of certified childcare workers/pre-school teachers and main place of work

In Denmark, Hungary, the Netherlands and Portugal, all facilities are operated by staff with tertiary educational skills. In all other countries, with the exception of Germany and Austria, the move from childcare for infants to preschoolers – generally at three years of age – corresponds to a change in formal arrangements, mostly shifting responsibility to the

education system. For some of these countries, such education-based care is the only form provided for preschoolers (e.g. France, Belgium, Italy) from the age of three onwards (see typology Table 4.5). In Ireland, the UK and the Netherlands, educational enrolment starts at the age of four (idem).

**Table 4.4:** Qualifications of certified childcare workers and main place of work

	Main type of staff	Initial training requirements	Age range	Main field of work	Continuous training	Child-to-staff ratio
BE	<i>Kinderverzorgster/ Puéricultrice</i>	3-year post-16 vocational secondary	0 - 3	<i>Kinderdagverblijf/Crèches</i> (or assistant in <i>école maternelle</i> )	Child care - limited to some services	7.0
CZ	<i>Dětská sestra</i>	4-year secondary nursing school	0 - 3	Creche	Voluntary - offered by regional centres	
DK	Paedagog	3- to 5-year vocational or tertiary education (depending on prior experience)	0 - 5	Educational, social care, special needs institutions (including day care)	Funding decentralised to municipalities	3.3 (0-2 years) 7.2 (3-5 years)
DE	<i>Kinderpflegerinnen</i>	2-year secondary vocational training	0 - 6	<i>Kindergarten</i>		
IE	Child carer / child minder	Wide variation	0 - 6	Child care centres		3.0 (>1) 6.0 (2-3 years)
FR	<i>Puéricultrices Educateurs de jeunes enfants</i>	Nurse/mid-wife + 1-year specialisation 27-month post-Bac in training centre	0 - 3 0 - 6	<i>Crèches/ assistant in école maternelle</i>		5.0 (0-2 years) 8.0 (2-3 years)
IT	Educatrice	Secondary vocational diploma	0 - 3	Asili nido	Municipality of director/inspector decides	7
HU	<i>Gondozó</i> (child care worker)	3-year post-secondary voc. training or specialist certificate	0 - 3	<i>Bölcsöde</i> (for children < 3)		6.0
NL	Leidster kinder-centra	2-year post-18 training	0 - 4	Kinderopvang	Funding decentralised to municipalities	4 (1 year) 5 (2 years) 6 (3 years)
AT	<i>Erzieherinnen Kindergartenpädagoginnen</i>	5-year vocational secondary	0 - 5	<i>Krippen</i> and <i>Hort</i> Kindergarten	Funding by provinces; 3-5 days per year	8.7
PT	Educadora de infância	4-year university or polytechnic	0 - 6	Creches ATL	Offered by regional teacher centres and universities to all teachers	11
FI	<i>Sosionomi (social pedagogues) Lähihoitaja</i> (practical nurses)	3-year secondary vocational	0 - 6	<i>Päiväkoti</i> (children's day care centre) <i>Avoim päiväkot</i>	Municipalities have to provide 3-10 days annual training	4.0 (0-3 years) 7.0 (3+ years)
SE	Barnskötare	2-year post 16 secondary	0 - 7	Open Förskola Fritidshem	Funding decentralised to municipalities	5.5
UK	Trained nursery teacher Nursery nurse	2-year post 16 secondary	3 - 11 0 - 5	Nursery (or assistant in above)	Limited for day-care workers	3 (>2 years) 4 (2-3 years) 8 (3-5 years)
NO	Assistents	2-year post - 16 apprenticeship	0 - 7	Barnehager / SFO		8 (>3 years)
CH	Childcare worker	Varies per canton		Creches, nurseries		4-5 (0-2) 7-8 (2-3)

Note: Situation as of 18.01.2007.

Source: OECD.

**Table 4.5:** Qualifications of certified pre-school teachers and main place of work

	Main type of staff	Initial training requirements	Age range	Main field of work	Continuous training	Ratio of child to teacher (% male teachers)
<b>BE</b>	Kleuteronderwijzer(es)/ Institutrice de maternelle	3-year pedagogical - tertiary	2.5 - 6	Kleuterschool/Ecole maternelle	Funding decentralised to schools	15.6 (1.6%)
<b>CZ</b>	Učitel mateřské školy	4-year secondary pedagogical or 3-year tertiary	3 - 6	Mateřská škola		13.4 (0.3%)
<b>DK</b>	Paedagog	3- to 5-year vocational or tertiary education (depending on prior experience)	0 - 10	Educational, social care, special needs institutions (including day care)	Funding decentralised to municipalities	6.9 (16% - 2001 data)
<b>DE</b>	Erzieherinnen	3-year secondary vocational training + 1-year internship	0 - 6	Kindergarten		13.9 (1.7%)
<b>IE</b>	Teacher	3-year tertiary degree	4 - 12	Schools		14 (7.7%)
<b>FR</b>	Instituteurs Puéricultrices	Bac + 2-years	2 - 6	Ecole maternelle		18.8 (19%)
<b>IT</b>	Insegnante di scuola materna	4-year tertiary degree	3 - 6	Scuola materna	Municipality or director/inspector decides	12.5 (0.4%)
<b>HU</b>	Pedagogue	3 - year tertiary degree	0 - 7	Ovoda (kindergarten for children 3-7)		10.5 (0.2%)
<b>NL</b>	Leraar basisonderwijs	3-year voc.higher education	4 - 12	Basischool	Funding decentralised to municipalities	
<b>AT</b>	Erzieherinnen Kindergartenpädagoginnen	5-year vocational secondary	0 - 5	Krippen and Hort Kindergarten	Provisional funding: 3-5 days per year	17.4 (0.8%)
<b>PT</b>	Educadora de infância	4-year university or polytechnic	0 - 6	Jardim de infância	Offered by regional teacher centres and universities to all teachers	16.5 (1.8%)
<b>FI</b>	Lastentarhanopettaja (kindergarten teachers)	3-4-5-year university or 3- to 5-year polytechnic	0 - 7	6-vuotiaiden esiopetus (pre- school class as well as kindergarten)	Funding decentralised to municipalities	12.7 (3.1%)
<b>SE</b>	Förskollärare Fritidspedagog	3-year university 3-year university	0 - 7	Förskoleclass Förskola	Funding decentralised to municipalities	11.2
<b>UK</b>	Qualified teacher	4-year university	4-8 (0-8)	Nursery classes	Regular access for teachers	17.6 (3.1%)
<b>NO</b>	Pedagogiske ledere	3-year vocational higher education	0 - 7	Bernhager SFO		
<b>CH</b>	Kindergarten teacher	Three year upper secondary and tertiary degree	3 - 6	Kindergarten/centre de vie enfantine/infant schools		18.2 (1.9%)

Note: Situation as of 18.01.2007.

Source: OECD.



#### 4.1.4 Demand for childcare services according to household composition

The supply of affordable and accessible childcare services grants parents more freedom to organise their working lives and maintain a satisfactory work-private life balance. The type of household a child is living in notably influences if and for how long childcare services are needed. It hence appears appropriate to take a closer look at childcare demand according to household composition.

One can reasonably state that childcare facilities are particularly important for, and more often used by, single parents, as single mothers and fathers cannot rely on their partner to share the child raising responsibilities.

Table 4.6 based on EU-SILC 2006 data presents the average number of hours of formal care according to the number of adults in the household, distinguishing between one adult and two or more (typically couples, but also multigenerational households).

Uncertain data due to small sample sizes make it impossible to draw conclusions for 0–2-year-olds at national level. For children aged between 3 and the age at which compulsory school starts, sample sizes are generally larger and yield some interesting facts.

Contrary to what could be expected, EU-25 figures reveal that single parents do not use formal childcare facilities much more than couples (or households with two or more adults), regardless of the child's age. The time children spend in formal care is only marginally higher among single-parent households: the differences compared to children living in households with two or more adults amount to less than one hour for the three age categories.

At country level, the only noticeable differences among the preschoolers are observed in Spain and the Netherlands, where the weekly length of formal care is a couple of hours longer among children living with single parents. Conversely, in Estonia and Italy, children remain slightly longer in formal care (around one hour per week) when living in households comprising two or more adults.

In the age group comprising children having entered compulsory schooling but below 12 years of age, the same decrease in hours of formal care can be observed when there is more than one adult in the household, except for Estonia, Ireland and Finland, where the number of hours of formal care increased.

**Table 4.6:** Formal childcare by type of household, average number of hours of childcare, 2006

Age	Singles		Two or more adults	
	0-2	3- mand	0-2	3- mand
<b>EU-25</b>	25.2 (p)	27.8 (p)	24.8 (p)	27.3 (p)
<b>EU-15</b>	25.1 (p)	27.2 (p)	24.6 (p)	26.6 (p)
<b>BE</b>	: (u)	28.6 (p)	28.1 (p)	28.5 (p)
<b>CZ</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	29.4
<b>DK</b>	: (u)	34.1 (u)	33.2	33.4
<b>DE</b>	: (u)	28.0 (p)	24.7 (p)	23.2 (p)
<b>EE</b>	: (u)	36.9 (u)	37.4 (u)	37.9
<b>IE</b>	: (u)	23.2 (p)	22.2 (p)	22.5 (p)
<b>EL</b>	: (u)	: (u)	31.5 (p) (u)	30.5 (p)
<b>ES</b>	: (u)	31.6 (u)	23.6	26.8
<b>FR</b>	: (u)	28.9 (p)	26.4 (p)	27.5 (p)
<b>IT</b>	28.5 (u)	32.5 (u)	30.4	33.7
<b>CY</b>	: (u)	: (u)	31.9	31.4
<b>LV</b>	: (u)	: (u)	39.7 (p)	40.2 (p)
<b>LT</b>	: (u)	: (u)	38.0 (p) (u)	39.9 (p)
<b>LU</b>	: (u)	: (u)	22.1	16.8
<b>HU</b>	: (u)	35.3 (u)	30.4 (u)	31.2
<b>MT</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	24.4
<b>NL</b>	: (u)	24.0	15.6	17.8
<b>AT</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	23.6
<b>PL</b>	: (u)	: (u)	37.5 (p) (u)	34.4 (p)
<b>PT</b>	: (u)	: (u)	38.9 (p)	28.5 (p)
<b>SI</b>	: (u)	: (u)	37.3	35.6
<b>SK</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	34.4 (p)
<b>FI</b>	: (u)	32.4	33.2	32.5
<b>SE</b>	: (u)	32.3 (u)	30.1	30.1
<b>UK</b>	20.1 (p) (u)	20.8 (p)	15.9 (p)	18.5 (p)
<b>IS</b>	: (u)	38.5 (u)	34.5	33.8
<b>NO</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)

Notes: (p) provisional value, (u) unreliable/uncertain data, : (u) extremely unreliable data. — Age groups: 0–2: from birth until the child's third birthday; 3-mand: from three years of age until the age at which mandatory education starts.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC 2006 data

### 4.1.5 Childcare arrangements other than formal care

The trade-off between formal and other types of childcare arrangements depends on a range of factors relating to supply and demand, including employment preferences, existing formal/informal care services in the country, income, the cost of formal childcare, trust, flexibility, convenience and also perceptions about the child's development. The need for childcare services is of course also linked to the starting age of compulsory school, which is in most EU countries at about six years of age.

Results of the EU-SILC 2006 survey provide interesting insights regarding the use of care arrangements other than formal care, which are to be understood here as childcare provided by a professional childminder at the child's home or at the childminder's home. These are direct arrangements between the carer and the parents, where parents are often employers who pay the carer directly. "Professional" childminders are persons for whom looking after the child represents a job or paid activity, including baby sitters and au pairs. The care can be provided either at the child's home or at the childminder's home. Such arrangements also include childcare by grand-parents, other household members (aside from parents), relatives, friends or neighbours. Here, care should be unpaid care (informal arrangements on an unpaid basis such as exchange of services). The care can be at the child's home or at the relative, friend or neighbour's home.

Table 4.7a, indicates that other types of care tend to be used in combination with formal care. At EU-25 level, a far higher share of children use informal childcare arrangements for one to 29 hours a week than for 30 hours or more; this was the case in all three age categories. For infants aged 0–2, 29% of all children are cared for in informal arrangements, two thirds of which between one and 29 hours per week. The proportion of preschoolers reaches 26%, with only 5% being in informal care for 30 hours or more. Full-time use of informal care decreases remarkably once children enter compulsory schooling. 18% of children between mandatory school age and 12 years of age are placed in informal childcare between one and 29 hours a week, usually to make up for the lack of formal care after school hours.

Member States where informal arrangements are less frequently used can easily be spotted in Table 4.7a, including Scandinavian countries and Germany, which feature very low shares (5% or under) across all age categories. This suggests either very comprehensive formal childcare arrangements or a low usage due to favourable parental leave modalities, or a combination of the two. Conversely, high shares of informal care use were registered in the Netherlands, Hungary, the United Kingdom and Luxembourg. In these countries however, informal care is mainly needed between 1 and 29 hours per week, as shares drop drastically for the category '30 hours or more'.

**Table 4.7a:** Types of childcare arrangements other than formal care, 2006*Percentage of the population of each age group*

Hours	0 to 2		3- mand		mand- 12	
	1-29 hours	30+ hours	1-29 hours	30+ hours	1-29 hours	30+ hours
<b>EU-25</b>	19 (p)	10 (p)	21 (p)	5 (p)	18 (p)	1 (p)
<b>EU-15</b>	19 (p)	9 (p)	20 (p)	4 (p)	18 (p)	1 (p)
<b>BE</b>	22 (p)	8 (p)	31 (p)	1 (p)	22 (p)	0 (p)
<b>CZ</b>	18	2 (u) (u)	21	1 (u)	16	1 (u)
<b>DK</b>	1 (u)	0 (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)
<b>DE</b>	5 (p)	2 (p)	2 (p)	1 (p)	3 (p)	0 (p)
<b>EE</b>	22	10 (u)	23	2 (u)	13	2 (u)
<b>IE</b>	22 (p)	14 (p)	31 (p)	3 (p)	16 (p)	1 (p)
<b>EL</b>	25 (p)	29 (p)	22 (p)	18 (p)	17 (p)	5 (p)
<b>ES</b>	17	9	12	4 (u)	8	1 (u)
<b>FR</b>	15 (p)	14 (p)	24 (p)	3 (p)	17 (p)	0 (p)
<b>IT</b>	22	13	31	5	26	2
<b>CY</b>	17 (u)	40	34	10 (u)	22	2 (u)
<b>LV</b>	5 (p)	9 (p)	4 (p)	9 (p)	4 (p)	1 (p)
<b>LT</b>	7 (p)	14 (p)	3 (p)	10 (p)	8 (p)	1 (p)
<b>LU</b>	30	11	36 (u)	6 (u)	31	2 (u)
<b>HU</b>	42	6 (u)	45	6 (u)	36	5
<b>MT</b>	11 (u)	5 (u)	9 (u)	4 (u)	11	1 (u)
<b>NL</b>	53	3 (u)	50	2 (u)	36	1 (u)
<b>AT</b>	31	5 (u)	35	2 (u)	23	0 (u)
<b>PL</b>	18 (p)	18 (p)	20 (p)	16 (p)	19 (p)	4 (p)
<b>PT</b>	9 (p)	37 (p)	20 (p)	11 (p)	17 (p)	1 (p)
<b>SI</b>	37	23	46	14	40	3
<b>SK</b>	15 (p)	8 (p)	20 (p)	6 (p)	21 (p)	1 (p)
<b>FI</b>	3 (u)	2 (u)	4 (u)	1 (u)	4	0 (u)
<b>SE</b>	2 (u)	2 (u)	3 (u)	1 (u)	2 (u)	:
<b>UK</b>	31 (p)	8 (p)	33 (p)	5 (p)	30 (p)	2 (p)
<b>IS</b>	3 (u)	19	1 (u)	1 (u)	2 (u)	0 (u)
<b>NO</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)

Notes: (p) provisional value, (u) unreliable/uncertain data, : (u) extremely unreliable data. — Age groups: 0–2: from birth until the child's third birthday; 3-mand: from three years of age until the age at which mandatory education starts; mand-12: from the age at which mandatory education starts until the child's 13th birthday.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC 2006 data.

In nearly all countries, care arrangements other than formal care are used for less than 30 hours a week. There are a few exceptions to this general picture. In Cyprus, 40% of 0–2-year-olds are placed in informal care for 30 hours or more). Similarly, in Portugal, 37% of 0–2-year-olds use 30 hours or more of informal care (against only 9% for 1 to 29 hours. Then follows Greece where 29% of 0–2-year-olds are placed in informal care for more than 30 hours. Finally, in Iceland, 19% of infants in this age group are in full-time informal care for more than 30 hours a week. These exceptions aside, other care types are always used on a part-time basis. Nevertheless, the average number of hours of informal care used can be very high in certain countries (see Table 4.7b) and can deviate substantially from the EU average. Keeping in mind the

average duration of 22 hours per week at EU-25 level, 0–2-year-olds are placed in informal care for an average 39 hours per week in Portugal, followed by 37 hours in Latvia and 33 hours in Lithuania. This should be compared with a mere 11 hours in the Czech Republic, and 13 hours in Austria and the Netherlands. In the other two age groups, informal care is always used on a part-time basis, with the exception of preschoolers in Latvia and Lithuania, where the average time spent in informal care slightly exceeds that of 0–2-year-olds.

#### Care provided by professional childminders and/or the grand parents

A particular type of informal care is care provided by professional childminders. Given that this is generally one of the most expensive forms of care, the share of children cared for in this way tends to be small in most countries. Nevertheless, at EU-25 level provisional data show that in this age group, 25.2% of infants are cared for by professional childminders for at least one hour per week (see Table 4.8).

Among the countries with high formal childcare coverage rates, only Iceland registered a relatively widespread use of professional childminders (34.7%), exceeding the EU average. Aside from this country, professional childminders account for substantial shares of total formal care for 0–2-year-olds in France (31%), Poland (33%), Cyprus (37.3%) and Portugal (42.6%). It is interesting to note that only children of the youngest age group are cared for by professional childminders to a considerable degree. However, for preschoolers and school-going children under 12 years of age, this type of care never exceeds 19% of all formal care arrangements available for these age groups, except for Poland (29%) and Sweden (26%) in the '3 to mandatory school age' category, although these values should be considered uncertain.

The role of grand-parents in childcare should not be underestimated, not only for the very young, but also for preschoolers and school-going children. At EU-25 level, close to 19% of 0–2-year-olds are cared for by grand-parents, this share gradually decreasing with age (see Table 4.8).

Among the countries for which data are available, high proportions throughout the age groups can be noted for Latvia and Lithuania as well as Portugal, Cyprus and Greece. To a somewhat lesser extent, relatively high values are also noted for Poland, Spain, Slovakia and Malta. In all of these countries, formal childcare is not as developed as, for instance, in western European Member States but also, and this aspect should not be underestimated, multigenerational households are quite common.

**Table 4.7b:** Average number of weekly hours of childcare arrangements other than formal, by age group, 2006

Age	0-2	3- mand	mand- 12
EU-25	22.0 (p)	17.0 (p)	11.7 (p)
EU-15	21.9 (p)	15.7 (p)	10.8 (p)
BE	19.1 (p)	10.7 (p)	8.2 (p)
CZ	10.7	11.6	11.0
DK	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)
DE	19.0 (p)	20.8 (p)	10.6 (p)
EE	20.9	14.1	13.4
IE	23.4 (p)	14.9 (p)	11.7 (p)
EL	30.1 (p)	28.0 (p)	18.0 (p)
ES	22.7	19.5	14.2
FR	26.9 (p)	14.5 (p)	10.9 (p)
IT	23.1	15.2	12.7
CY	34.9	20.4	15.1
LV	36.6 (p)	37.9 (p)	24.0 (p)
LT	33.4 (p)	36.9 (p)	18.3 (p)
LU	21.1	15.2	10.6
HU	14.1	13.8	13.4
MT	19.0 (u)	20.0 (u)	10.2
NL	12.9	10.5	6.4
AT	13.2	10.2	8.4
PL	27.3 (p)	26.6 (p)	17.2 (p)
PT	39.0 (p)	24.5 (p)	16.4 (p)
SI	22.9	16.6	11.0
SK	22.0 (p)	18.8 (p)	13.2 (p)
FI	23.0 (u)	14.0	12.2
SE	27.4 (u)	25.3 (u)	12.8 (u)
UK	17.3 (p)	15.1 (p)	10.0 (p)
IS	33.6	: (u)	: (u)
NO	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)

Notes: At least one hour of care per week. – (p) provisional value, (u) unreliable/uncertain data, : (u) extremely unreliable data. — Age groups: 0–2: from birth until the child's third birthday; 3-mand: from three years of age until the age at which mandatory education starts; mand-12: from the age at which mandatory education starts until the child's 13th birthday.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC 2006 data.





**Table 4.8:** Average number of weekly hours of childcare by professional childminders and by grand-parents, by age group of the children, 2006

Age	Professional child-minder			Grand-parents		
	0-2	3- mand	mand- 12	0-2	3- mand	mand- 12
<b>EU-25</b>	25.2 (p)	15.9 (p)	9.8 (p)	18.7 (p)	15.9 (p)	11.3 (p)
<b>EU-15</b>	24.8 (p)	15.4 (p)	9.6 (p)	18.2 (p)	14.3 (p)	10.3 (p)
<b>BE</b>	22.2 (p) (u)	7.4 (p) (u)	6.2 (p) (u)	17.6 (p)	11.2 (p)	8.5 (p)
<b>CZ</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	10.4	11.6	11.0
<b>DK</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)
<b>DE</b>	18.3 (p) (u)	: (u)	10.8 (p) (u)	: (u)	: (u)	10.2 (p) (u)
<b>EE</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	18.8	14.3	13.4
<b>IE</b>	24.7 (p)	16.7 (p)	11.1 (p)	18.2 (p)	13.3 (p)	11.6 (p)
<b>EL</b>	27.6 (p) (u)	: (u)	: (u)	28.2 (p)	27.3 (p)	17.7 (p)
<b>ES</b>	23.3 (u)	17.2 (u)	13.9	22.0	18.5	13.6
<b>FR</b>	31.0 (p)	14.9 (p)	9.7 (p)	18.4 (p)	12.3 (p)	10.5 (p)
<b>IT</b>	17.0	11.2	8.2	21.8	14.5	12.5
<b>CY</b>	37.3 (u)	: (u)	: (u)	32.5	20.0	14.9
<b>LV</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	35.2 (p) (u)	38.0 (p) (u)	25.3 (p) (u)
<b>LT</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	31.5 (p) (u)	36.6 (p)	18.0 (p)
<b>LU</b>	23.0	17.9 (u)	11.9	14.8	9.0 (u)	7.9
<b>HU</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	13.8	13.9	13.5
<b>MT</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	19.4 (u)	19.7 (u)	10.1
<b>NL</b>	13.1	10.2	6.6	10.7	8.5	5.3
<b>AT</b>	21.0 (u)	13.5 (u)	9.0 (u)	9.7	8.9	7.9
<b>PL</b>	33.0 (p)	28.7 (p) (u)	18.5 (p) (u)	25.1 (p)	26.1 (p)	17.0 (p)
<b>PT</b>	42.6 (p) (u)	: (u)	15.9 (p) (u)	35.7 (p)	23.4 (p)	16.2 (p)
<b>SI</b>	24.8 (u)	: (u)	9.1 (u)	21.8	16.1	10.9
<b>SK</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	21.7 (p)	18.8 (p)	13.2 (p)
<b>FI</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	16.5 (u)	11.5	12.2
<b>SE</b>	: (u)	25.6 (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)
<b>UK</b>	22.9 (p)	17.6 (p) (u)	10.1 (p)	13.9 (p)	12.9 (p)	9.1 (p)
<b>IS</b>	34.7	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)
<b>NO</b>	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)	: (u)

Notes: At least one hour of care per week. – (p) provisional value, (u) unreliable/uncertain data, : (u) extremely unreliable data. — Age groups: 0-2: from birth until the child's third birthday; 3-mand: from three years of age until the age at which mandatory education starts; mand-12: from the age at which mandatory education starts until the child's 13th birthday.

Source: Eurostat, EU-SILC 2006 data.

#### 4.1.6 Labour Force Survey data: a different definition of formal care

Data stemming from the ad hoc module of the 2005 European Labour Force Survey also generate interesting results as regards childcare issues. However, the definitions of formal/informal care are somewhat different compared to the

concept used in EU-SILC (see box below for more information). Nevertheless, selected aspects are presented below, complementing the information taken from EU-SILC.

##### The Labour Force Survey's 2005 *ad hoc* module

The 2005 ad hoc module on 'Reconciliation between work and family life' is specified by Commission Regulation (EC) No 29/2004 of 8 January 2004. Participating countries included the EU-25 Member States, the three EFTA countries as well as Bulgaria and Romania (the latter two countries having joined the EU on 1 January 2007).

The aims of the module are the following:

- Find out to what extent persons participate in the labour force at the level they would wish, and whether the reasons for an insufficient participation are connected with a lack of suitable care services for children and/or dependent persons:
  - Identification of care responsibilities (children and dependents).
  - Analysis of the consequences on labour participation taking into account the choice/constraint dimension.
  - In case of constraint, identification of those linked to the lack or unsuitability of care services.
- Analysis of the degree of flexibility offered at work in terms of reconciliation with family life.
- Estimate to what extent leave or absence is taken (as specified in Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3.6.1996, OJ L145).

For more information see: 'Reconciliation between work and family life: final report to the 2005 LFS ad hoc module', available at: [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-RA-07-011/EN/KS-RA-07-011-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-07-011/EN/KS-RA-07-011-EN.PDF)

NewCronos tables are available at:

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?\\_pageid=1996,45323734&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/labour/employ&language=en&product=EU\\_MASTER\\_labour\\_market&root=EU\\_MASTER\\_labour\\_market&scrollto=0](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page?_pageid=1996,45323734&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL&screen=welcomeref&open=/labour/employ&language=en&product=EU_MASTER_labour_market&root=EU_MASTER_labour_market&scrollto=0)

##### The main differences compared to EU-SILC include:

*Definition of formal care:* In the LFS ad hoc module, formal care includes the care given by professional childminders (at the child's home or at the childminder's home), whereas this is considered as being part of 'other types of arrangements' (i.e. other than formal arrangements) in EU-SILC.

*Household composition:* In the LFS ad hoc module, households with children are broken down into three categories: 'Singles', 'Couples' and 'Other types' (see also Chapter 1, giving further details on household structure in LFS), whereas EU-SILC only distinguished between 'Single' and 'Two or more adults'. The latter category would then include multigenerational households.

*Age of children:* childcare issues relate to children aged under 15 years, whereas in EU-SILC these relate to children up to the age of 12.

The variation in the extent to which formal care is used according to the number of adults living in the household may be expected to be related to what these adults do professionally. When considering couples, one might expect that when only one person is employed, childcare responsibilities will be ensured by the respective partner living

in the household, whatever the age of the children. Households where both parents work will probably make use of paid childcare facilities and/or rely on their relatives. This will also be the case for employed single parents who face more difficulties in reconciling work with childcare responsibilities.



This is indeed more or less what is revealed by Table 4.9. At this stage, it might be useful to recall that the 2005 ad hoc module variable used in this section refers to four main categories:

- *Childcare services*: crèches, day-care centres, organised family care (e.g. family crèches, home-based care by childminders affiliated to a child-minding service), after-school care centres, paid carers.
- *Childcare by partner*: Partner living in the household.
- *Childcare by relatives*: including grandparents, father/mother living outside the household, neighbours, friends, etc.
- *No childcare used*: if children up to 14 always take care of themselves/each other or if a parent works at home/cares for the child at the work place or if no childcare is used at all.

When couples are compared across the three different employment scenarios (both employed full-time, one full-time and one part-time and one employed and the other not), childcare services are mostly used when both partners are employed full-time. This group is closely followed by that of couples in which one partner works full-time and the other

part-time. Finally, childcare services are much less used when one of the partners is not employed, in which case the partner becomes the main person responsible for caring for the children, as shown in the table. There are just two minor exceptions to this general pattern. In Estonia and Latvia, childcare services are more often used by couples in which one partner works full-time and the other part-time than by those in which both are full-time employed.

Discrepancies between countries appear when considering the relative share in which all four types of childcare considered are used. When both partners in a couple are employed full-time, as much as 60% of all childcare arrangements used are provided by childcare services in Hungary, compared to only 4% in Malta. When one partner is employed full-time and the other part-time, the share of childcare services used out of all childcare arrangements ranges from 5% in Malta to 51% in Hungary. Finally, when one partner is employed and the other not, this share ranges from 2% in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands to 27% in Latvia. As mentioned earlier, in this case most childcare responsibilities are provided by the non-working partner (between 50% in Latvia and 96% in the Czech Republic).

**Table 4.9:** Childcare services and couples, 2005

*Main childcare services used among couples in age group 25-49 and for a given employment pattern (%)*

	Both employed full-time				One employed and one not employed				One part-time and one full-time			
	Childcare services	No childcare used	Partner	Relatives	Childcare services	No childcare used	Partner	Relatives	Childcare services	No childcare used	Partner	Relatives
BE	42	18	11	29	15	8	72	6	36	24	15	25
BG	24	40	11	25	8	10	76	6	20	36	29	15
CZ	24	22	28	27	2	1	96	1	23	14	40	24
DE	25	27	35	12	4	5	88	3	17	21	47	15
EE	37	45	7	12	10	23	65	2	42	36	14	8
EL	37	18	8	37	5	2	90	2	24	16	24	36
ES	32	27	17	24	6	13	78	3	24	30	26	21
FR	42	27	10	21	7	8	80	5	35	29	15	20
IT	23	10	32	36	3	2	89	6	23	10	41	26
CY	24	20	14	43	: u	: u	: u	: u	13	22	43	22
LV	40	42	5	14	27	22	50	1	43	32	9	16
LT	25	47	16	11	: u	: u	: u	: u	18	47	24	11
LU	43	31	8	19	: u	: u	: u	: u	24	38	15	23
HU	60	16	3	22	11	2	83	3	51	10	9	30
MT	4	41	29	26	: u	: u	: u	:	5	37	26	32
NL	31	24	31	14	2	6	91	1	17	20	51	12
AT	19	14	45	22	6	4	83	8	16	11	49	24
PT	45	23	6	26	13	24	57	6	21	42	19	18
RO	15	36	25	24	3	27	59	11	10	30	47	13
SI	41	20	16	23	12	7	78	3	34	18	17	31
SK	44	29	8	19	9	7	81	3	29	42	8	21
UK	30	30	17	23	3	15	79	3	18	31	32	19

Note: DK, IE, PL, FI and SE are missing.

Source: Eurostat, LFS and ad hoc Module.

## 4.2 Care for persons other than children

Europe's population is ageing. The post-war baby boom led to a bulge in the population pyramid that has gradually been working its way through the age groups: those born in the late 1940s are reaching retirement age. The boom lasted well into the 1960s and this generation will reach retirement age over the next 25 years.

However, there are other, longer-term structural factors which are also influencing the age distribution of the population. Europeans are living longer and the overall European birth rate has fallen well below the level needed to sustain a stable population. Although immigration may compensate to a limited extent for these effects, current levels are too low to

make any significant contribution. As a result the balance between the generations is changing and the numbers of middle-aged and elderly people are growing in relation to the young.

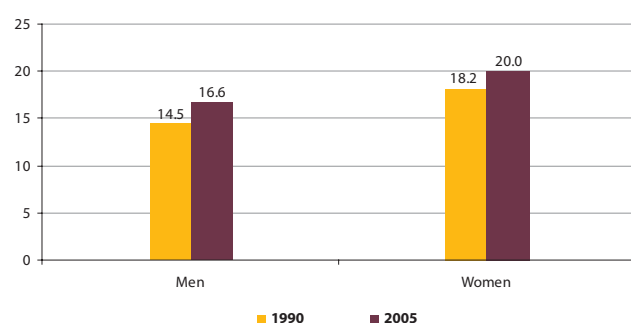
This section aims to give an insight on the care supplied in private households for the growing proportion of elderly persons, but also to disabled and other dependent persons. It excludes aspects linked to care provided by professional caretakers and care supplied in professional care-taking institutions, such as retirement homes or homes for the physically and mentally disabled.

### 4.2.1 Demographic developments

#### Higher life expectancy

According to the latest estimates (2005), in the EU women at age 65 can expect to live on average another 20 years or slightly more, while men can expect to live another 17 years (Figure 4.3). Between 1990 and 2005, life expectancy at age 65 across the EU rose marginally faster for men than for women, by around 26 months, against 21 months for their female counterparts, thus closing the gap only slightly.

**Figure 4.3:** Life expectancy at the age of 65, by gender, 1990 and 2005 (years)



Source: Eurostat (Demography).

Although trends towards longer life expectancy are positive, fertility rates are also persistently low in the EU. Fertility rates are now below replacement level (2.1 children per couple) in nearly all EU countries. As a result, the natural population growth is stagnating or outright decreasing.

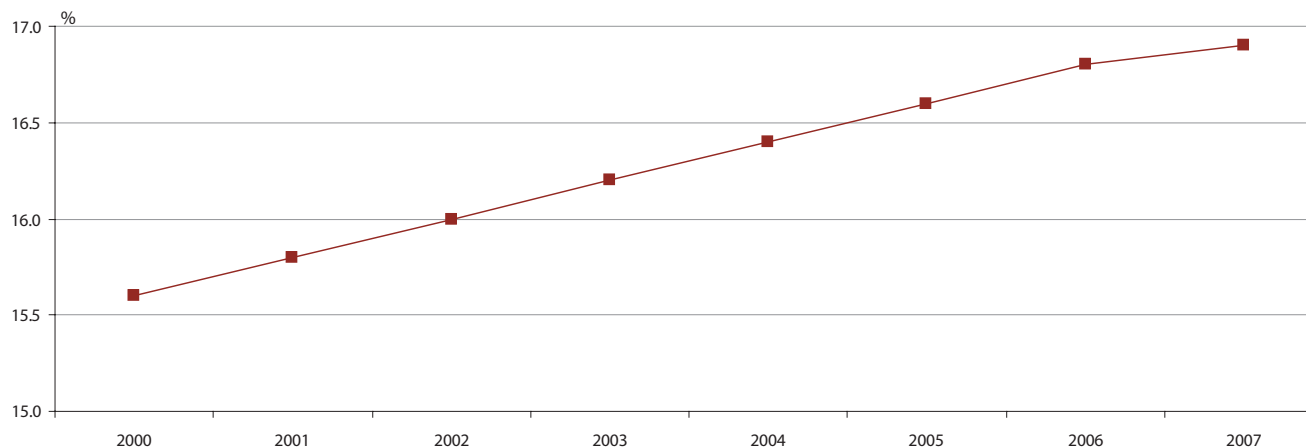
These two independent factors, living longer and a low fertility rate, inevitably result in an increasing old-age dependency ratio<sup>(1)</sup>. This trend is dampened to some extent by immigration. Net migration in the EU-27 has been positive between 2000 and 2005, averaging 1.6 million per year, and represents a significant factor in population growth.

In the EU-27, the share of the population aged 65 and over in the total population has increased from 15.6% to 16.9% between 2000 and 2007 (Figure 4.4). The ageing of the European Union's population can hence largely be ascribed to the low average number of children per woman (the fertility rate) and the increase in life expectancy. The latter will notably lead to an increase in the number of people aged 80 and over, many of them spending decades in retirement and reaching an age frequently characterised by infirmity and disability.

<sup>(1)</sup> The ratio between the total number of elderly persons of an age when they are generally economically inactive (aged 65 and over) and the number of persons of working age (from 15 to 64).

**Figure 4.4:** EU-27 population aged 65 and over, 2000-2007

as a proportion of the total population



Note: On the 1st of January of each year.

Source: Eurostat (Demography).

The average share of the population aged 65 and over registered in the EU in 2007 (16.9%) masks large disparities at Member State level, ranging from as low as 11.1% in Ireland to as high as 19.9% in Italy. The latter also registered the lowest share of young population (aged 0 to 15 — 14.1%) whereas at the other end of the scale, Ireland counted the most youngsters (20.3%).

Three Member States (Denmark, Ireland and Sweden) registered a slight decrease of the population aged 65 and over between 1990 and 2007. Conversely, this share increased in the remaining countries, reaching sometimes more than 5 percentage points (Estonian, Italy, Latvia and Slovenia). The highest increases were observed during the period 1990–2000.

The old-age dependency ratio (ratio between the population aged 65 and over and the population of working age aged 15 to 64) is increasing, indicating the ageing of the EU population as a whole. Eurostat projections show that this ratio will double between 2004 and 2050. By the middle of the century, there will be one person aged 65 or over for every two aged between 15 and 64. In the coming decades, an ever smaller working-age population will have to support an ever greater number of pensioners. One consequence will be the increasing demand for care services for the elderly.

**Table 4.10:** Population aged 65 and over as a share of the total population (%)

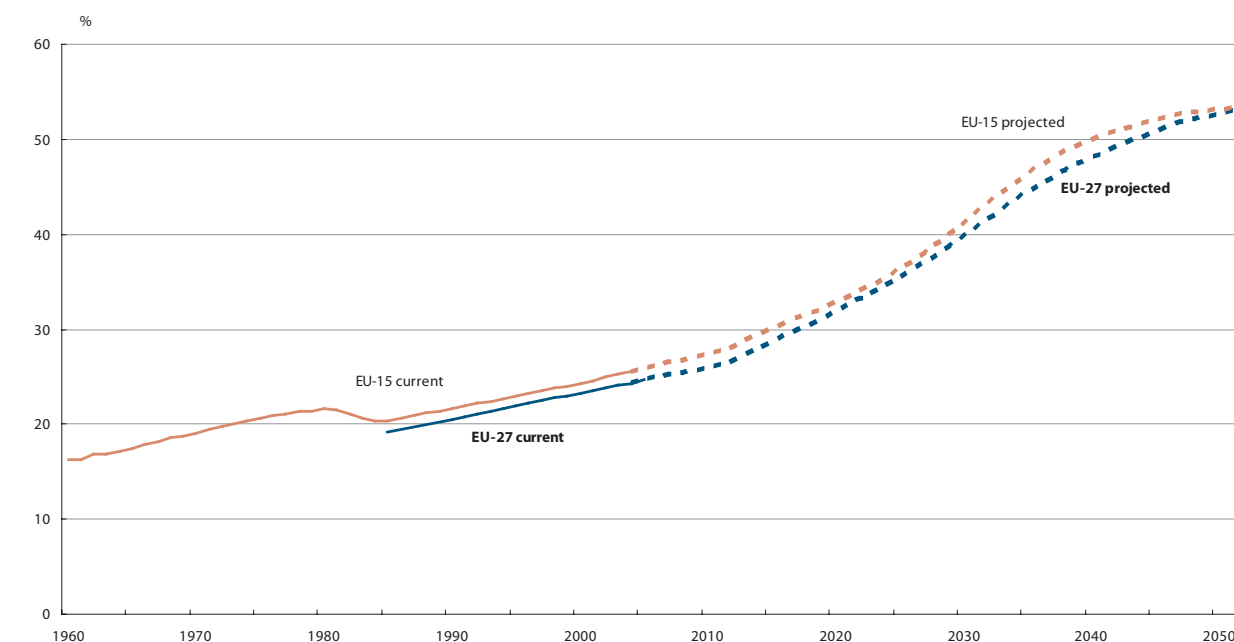
	1990	2000	2006	2007
<b>EU-27</b>	13.7	15.6	16.8	16.9
<b>BE</b>	14.8	16.8	17.2	17.1
<b>BG</b>	13.0	16.2	17.2	17.3
<b>CZ</b>	12.5	13.8	14.2	14.4
<b>DK</b>	15.6	14.8	15.2	15.3
<b>DE</b>	14.9	16.2	19.3	19.8
<b>EE</b>	11.6	15.0	16.7	17.1
<b>IE</b>	11.4	11.2	11.1	11.1
<b>EL</b>	13.7	16.5	18.5	18.6
<b>ES</b>	13.4	16.7	16.7	16.7
<b>FR</b>	:	15.8	16.2	16.2
<b>IT</b>	14.7	18.1	19.7	19.9
<b>CY</b>	10.8	11.2	12.0	12.3
<b>LV</b>	11.8	14.8	16.8	17.1
<b>LT</b>	10.8	13.7	15.3	15.6
<b>LU</b>	13.4	14.3	14.1	14.0
<b>HU</b>	13.2	15.0	15.8	15.9
<b>MT</b>	10.4	12.1	13.7	13.8
<b>NL</b>	12.8	13.6	14.3	14.5
<b>AT</b>	14.9	15.4	16.5	16.9
<b>PL</b>	10.0	12.1	13.3	13.4
<b>PT</b>	13.2	16.0	17.1	17.3
<b>RO</b>	10.3	13.4	14.8	14.9
<b>SI</b>	10.6	13.9	15.6	15.9
<b>SK</b>	10.3	11.4	11.7	11.9
<b>FI</b>	13.3	14.8	16.0	16.5
<b>SE</b>	17.8	17.3	17.3	17.4
<b>UK</b>	15.7	15.8	16.0	16.0

Notes: on 1 January of each year — ':': data not available.

Source: Eurostat (Demography).

**Figure 4.5:** Old-age dependency ratio : EU-15 and EU-27 (%)

Ratio between the total number of elderly persons (aged 65 and over) and the number of persons of working age (aged 15 to 64)



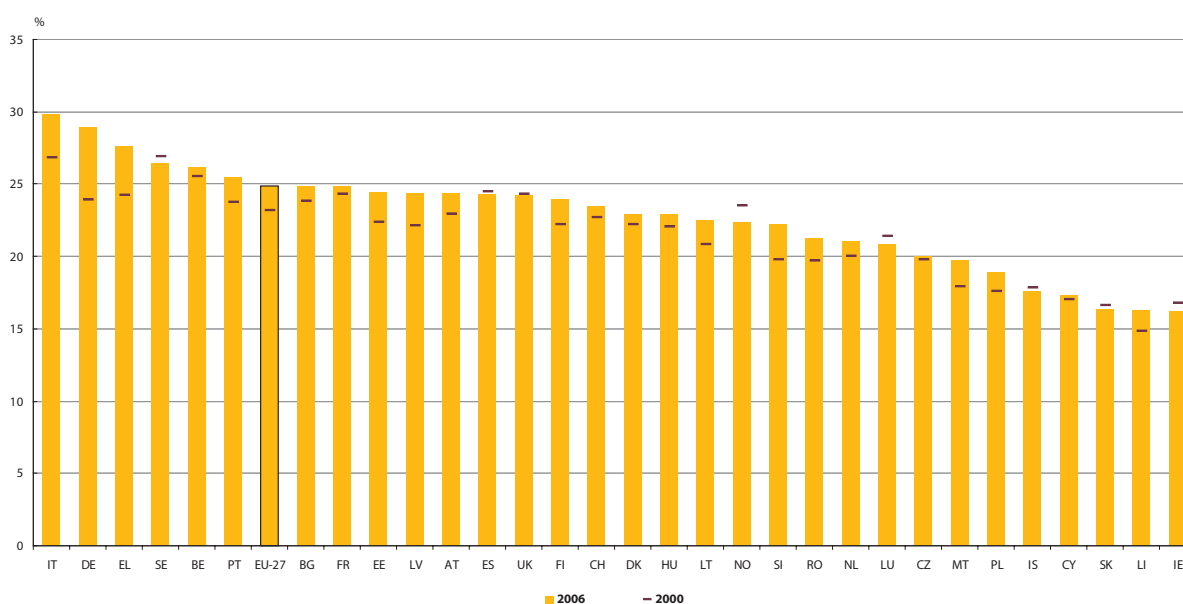
Source: Eurostat (Sustainable Development Indicators).

The old-age dependency ratio has grown at an average rate of about 0.3 percentage points per year since 1990 in both the EU-15 and the EU-27. However, this evolution should be examined over a long time frame, as changes are gradual and highly dependent on the past. In particular, the impact of the

baby boom generation is significant: while it increased the working-age population and contributed to reduce the old-age dependency ratio until the turn of the century, the reverse effects will be observed thereafter.

**Figure 4.6:** Old-age-dependency ratio, by country, 2000 and 2006 (%)

Ratio between the total number of elderly persons (aged 65 and over) and the number of persons of working age (aged 15 to 64)



Source: Eurostat (Demography).



At Member State level, the old-age dependency ratio was highest in Italy and Germany, with values close to 30% and 29% respectively. The lowest levels were registered in Slovakia and Ireland, with values of around 16%, well below the EU-27 average of 25%. Compared to 2000, this ratio increased in

most Member States, except for Sweden, Spain, the United Kingdom, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Ireland. The largest difference was recorded in Norway, where the ratio fell by 1.1 percentage points.

## 4.2.2 Family care for the elderly and the disabled

The increase in the number of elderly and disabled people has led to a growing need for specific care. This type of care is often supplied by families and relatives. The fact that care for the elderly and the disabled mainly takes place within the family may be due to limited access to formal care. On the other hand, family care is driven by a strong cultural component as regards responsibility for elderly family members. Finally, the household composition is another factor in determining to what extent informal care can be provided. Indeed, the presence of adult relatives or grown-up children in the household can facilitate home care for the elderly.

There is a hierarchy in relation to the importance of the different groups of caregivers. In a classic family pattern, it is primarily the spouse who is expected to give care. Behind him or her, the daughters and daughters-in-law take second position in that hierarchy. In reality however, daughters or

daughters-in-law aged between 45 and 65 often play a fundamental role in terms of informal care, which can be explained by the age structure of the risk to be in need of help. It rises when people are 80 and older, an age when the elderly are frequently widowed. But this most important group of middle-aged women is shrinking, not only as an effect of demographic development but also because of the rising employment of women in this age category.

In debates on family care it is often argued that the general evolution towards a more individualistic lifestyle has caused a motivation loss for women to care for their elderly relatives in the household, and that family solidarity would gradually disappear. This is not supported by empirical data.

SHARE data (see box below) can provide useful information on the amount of personal care the elderly and disabled receive from within and outside the family.

### SHARE data

The Survey of Health, Ageing and Retirement in Europe (SHARE) is a multidisciplinary and cross-national panel database of micro data on health, socio-economic status and social and family networks.

The main aim of SHARE is to create a pan-European interdisciplinary panel data set covering persons aged 50 years and older. The project brings together many disciplines, including demography, economics, epidemiology, psychology, sociology and statistics. Scientists from some 15 countries have worked on feasibility studies, experiments, and instrument development, culminating in a first survey in 2004, covering 11 countries. The multidisciplinary nature of the data provides new insights into the complex interactions between economic, health, psychological and social factors determining the quality of life of the elderly.

Eleven countries ranging from Scandinavia (Sweden, Denmark), Western and Central Europe (France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Austria) to the Mediterranean (Spain, Italy, Greece) are currently participants. The survey will follow a common set-up across all countries with the goal of collecting data that are strictly comparable to allow cross-country research.

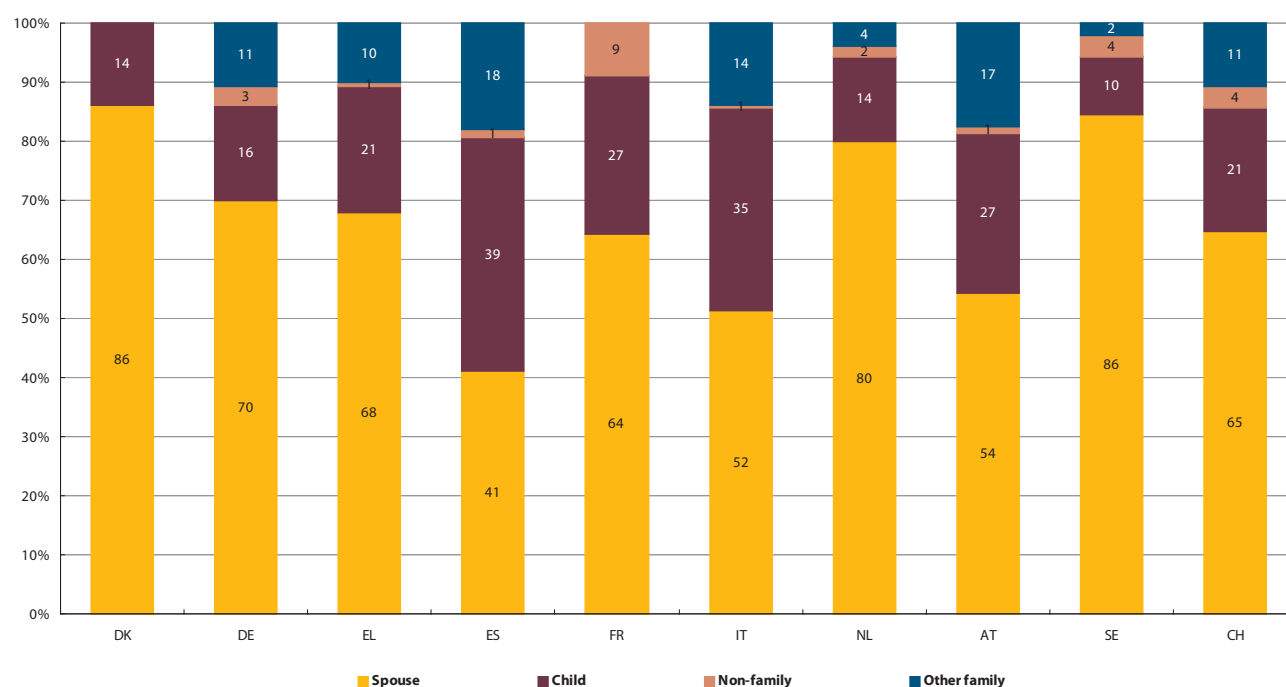
For more information: <http://www.share-project.org>



Figure 4.7 shows from whom elderly and disabled people receive personal care within the household. In general, personal care within the household is to a very large extent

provided by spouses. Nevertheless, it should be noted that in Spain, children and other family members are more involved than spouses.

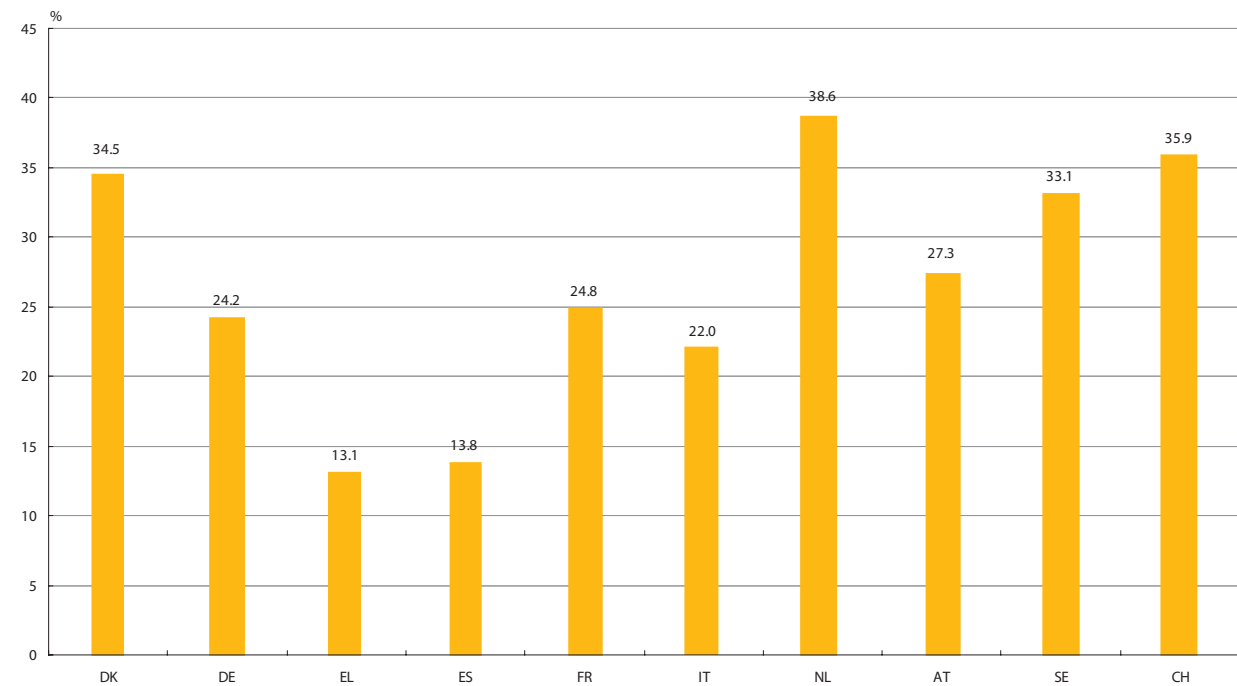
**Figure 4.7:** Persons providing personal care to elderly people with health problems or disability within the household, 2004 (%)



Source: SHARE.

It should also be considered that a much higher share of elderly people live in their own household in northern countries than in southern Europe. The next figure presents the share of respondents living alone receiving non-family help (including professional services and help from friends and neighbours). Unsurprisingly, these SHARE data show that the elderly living alone receive more 'non-family help' compared to those living with others. Indeed, one third of the respondents living alone received help with personal care or practical tasks during the past 12 months. These shares were

significantly lower in Spain, Italy and Greece. Nevertheless, it seems that family support in southern countries, which is traditionally strong, is weakened when older people are living alone and that these countries may not have adequate infrastructure to facilitate living independently in old age. Living alone in countries where formal service levels are low appears to be a more risky living arrangement than in the northern countries, where institutional care and assistance facilities for the elderly are better developed.

**Figure 4.8:** Proportion of elderly with health problems or disability living alone and receiving non-family help, 2004

Source: SHARE.

Over the past 30 years the labour force participation rate of women has increased, especially among the 35 to 55 year olds, the core age group involved in care for the elderly and disabled. The possibility to combine care for elderly and disabled people in the family and a job varies with the degree of caring needs. The impact of care needs on labour force participation is hence a dynamic process, as the conditions for combining both duties are changing constantly.

Giving up working is often the result of a joint family decision. Considering the costs of formal care and loss of income resulting from leaving work, it is quite common for both

partners in a couple to decide which option is the most favourable for the family. Even if the caregiver (most often the woman/wife) acknowledges the drawbacks of such a decision (no or less social security coverage, drop in family income, less social interaction) the “family logic” and responsibilities towards the elderly – most often parents – can be stronger.

It comes as no surprise that employed women resort to formal care services more often than women who are not employed. Working carers organise their everyday schedules, rationalise leisure time, housework and care, even though this can lead to conflicts with the care needs of the elderly.

The following figures consider persons regularly taking care of ill, disabled or elderly relatives/friends aged 15 or over in need of care, living inside or outside the household. For this, results of the 2005 LFS ad hoc Module on reconciliation between work and family life have been used (see also box in Section 4.1).

Caregivers are defined here as persons who look after or help friends/relatives in need of care on a regular basis (i.e. every day, every week, etc.). People may need care on account of illness, general old age, inability to look after oneself or disability. Caring tasks are defined as follows: personal care (e.g. dressing, washing); physical help (e.g. walking); helping with paperwork or financial matters; domestic help (e.g. housework, laundry); company, talking, visiting.

The survey results show that among respondents, the proportion of caregivers never exceeded 10% across Europe. The lowest share was recorded in Luxembourg with only 0.5% and the highest in Cyprus with 9.7%. The share registered in Luxembourg can be explained by a well-organised public care service for ill, disabled and elderly persons <sup>(2)</sup>.

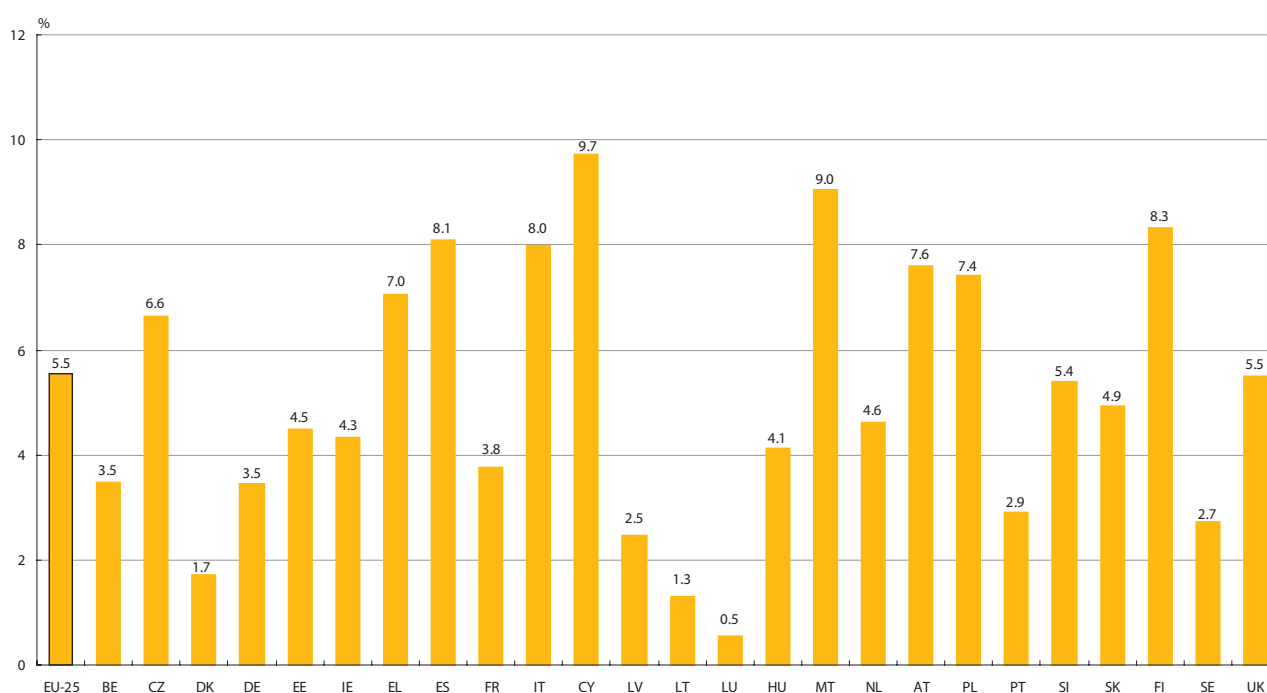
As a rule, women were more involved in caring than men in all Member States, particularly in Malta, Spain, Italy and Cyprus<sup>(3)</sup>. Denmark and Lithuania registered the lowest shares; where disabled and elderly persons are generally taken care of by publicly-funded care institutions.

<sup>(2)</sup> European Commission (2007), Reconciliation between work and family life: final report to the 2005 LFS ad hoc module, Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 76p.

<sup>(3)</sup> A detailed analysis on the gender differences as regards caring responsibilities was set aside in order to avoid problems linked to small sample size.

**Figure 4.9:** Persons regularly taking care of ill, disabled or elderly relatives/friends aged 15 or more in need of care, 2005

*Persons aged 25-49 as a proportion of all persons of the same age group*



Note: no data available for Bulgaria and Romania.

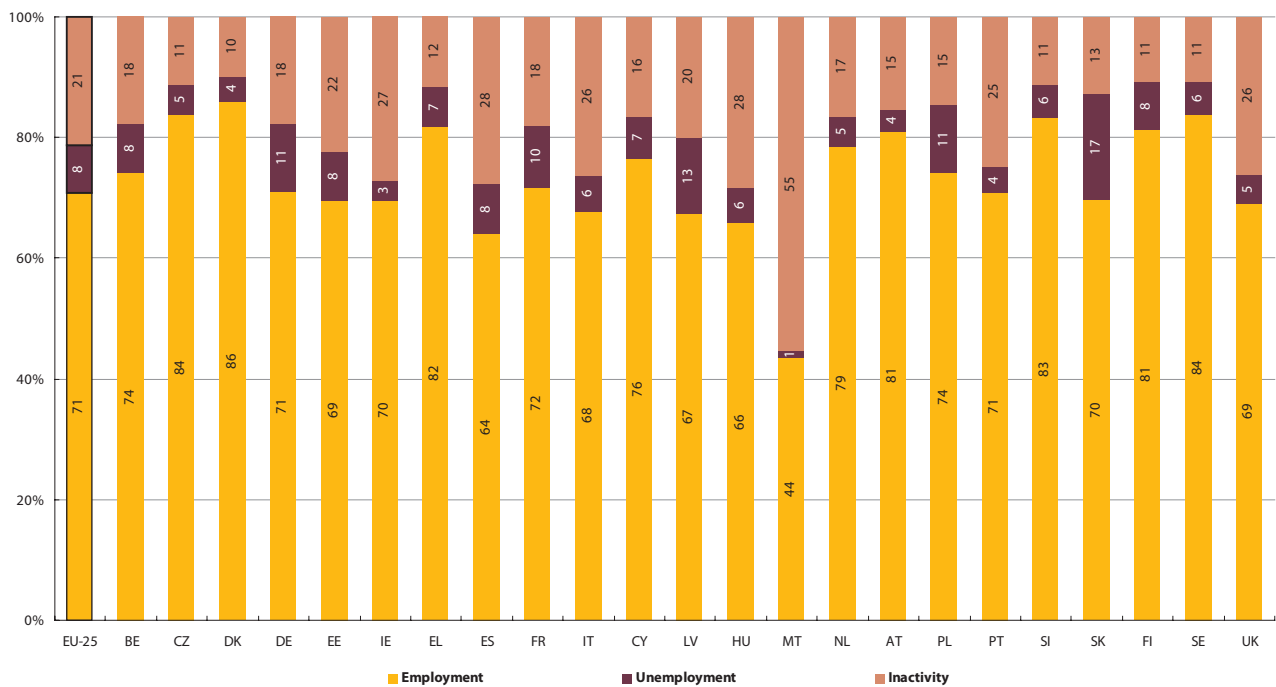
Source: Eurostat (LFS ad hoc module 2005).

Figure 4.10 displays the proportions of people regularly taking care of ill, disabled and elderly people according to their situation in relation to work. It appears that a large share of carers are employed. But there are exceptions: in Malta, the majority of caregivers are unemployed. This outcome should

not be attributed to caring responsibilities but rather to the employment rates (and to a lesser extent unemployment rates) which in Malta are the lowest compared to the other Member States <sup>(4)</sup>.

<sup>(4)</sup> Refer to Chapter 1 for more details.

**Figure 4.10:** Persons regularly taking care of ill, disabled, elderly relatives/friends aged 15 or more in need of care by working status, 2005



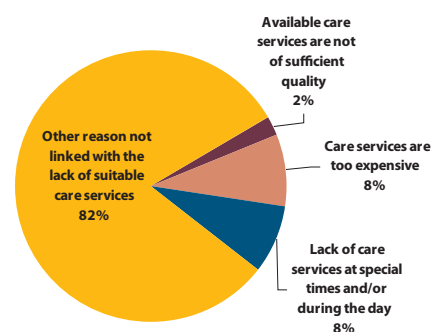
Notes: no data available for Bulgaria and Romania. — Lithuania and Luxembourg unreliable or uncertain data.

Source: Eurostat (LFS ad hoc module 2005).

When restricting the view to the main reasons mentioned by caregivers for not working, or not working more, it seems that the availability of care services is not the main cause. Indeed, only 18% of the carers reported that constraints such as insufficient quality, high costs and unavailability of care services persuaded them not to work or work more. Conversely, 82% mentioned 'Other reasons not linked with the lack of suitable care services' as main reason. These 'other reasons' include carers unable to find a job, but also those that give care to persons who have difficulties accepting carers other than family members or relatives.

**Figure 4.11:** Main reason for not working, or not working more, EU-25, 2005

Proportion of persons aged 25-49 taking care of ill, disabled, elderly relatives/friends aged 15 or more in need of care



Source: Eurostat (LFS ad hoc module 2005).

Finally, it would be interesting to analyse the share of carers wishing to change working life in order to better balance gainful work and care. The statistical results show that most caregivers (76% at EU level) seem to be satisfied with the organisation of their working life. Satisfaction rates did not drop below 65% in all countries considered.

27.5% of Danish carers, the highest share among the Member States, stated they wished to work less in order to have more time for caring. Other countries that scored high in this respect were Greece (19.7%), Cyprus (18.1%) and Italy (17.7%). The lowest shares (below 3%) were found in the

Netherlands, a country with a large availability of part-time jobs, and France.

As such, these results appear consistent as almost one third of caregivers in France (32.1%) wish to work or to work more and therefore reduce the amount of time spent on caring. This share still exceeded that of the Netherlands by a large margin, where 20.7% of caregivers would like to find a job or to work more. Shares in Latvia and Estonia were similar to that of the Netherlands, with 19.6% and 17.0% respectively. Carers in Finland were the least prone to change, with only 2.1% expressing the desire to find employment or to work more.

**Table 4.11:** Persons taking care of ill, disabled or elderly relatives/friends aged 15 or more wishing to change their working life organisation, 2005

*as a proportion of all caregivers aged 25-49*

	No change wanted	Wish to work less to have more time for caring	Wish to work or to work more (and reduce caring time)
<b>EU-25</b>	76.0	10.4	13.6
<b>BE</b>	85.7	8.1	6.3
<b>CZ</b>	83.8	11.2	5.0
<b>DK</b>	69.6	27.5	2.9 u
<b>DE</b>	80.3	4.9	14.7
<b>EE</b>	73.2	9.7	17.0
<b>IE</b>	82.7	8.9	8.4
<b>EL</b>	71.8	19.7	8.5
<b>ES</b>	75.1	10.4	14.5
<b>FR</b>	66.7	1.1	32.1
<b>IT</b>	68.2	17.7	14.1
<b>CY</b>	76.1	18.1	5.9
<b>LV</b>	76.6	3.8 u	19.6
<b>LT</b>	:	: u	: u
<b>LU</b>	:	: u	: u
<b>HU</b>	75.9	13.9	10.3
<b>MT</b>	:	: u	: u
<b>NL</b>	76.6	2.7	20.7
<b>AT</b>	87.1	6.9	6.0
<b>PL</b>	85.4	6.2	8.4
<b>PT</b>	83.3	8.5	8.1
<b>SI</b>	74.8	15.2	10.1
<b>SK</b>	78.7	5.8	15.5
<b>FI</b>	81.2	16.7	2.1
<b>SE</b>	84.6	7.6	7.8
<b>UK</b>	78.7	11.2	10.2

Notes: no data available for Bulgaria and Romania. — ': no data available. — u: unreliable or uncertain data due to a small sample size.

Source: Eurostat (LFS).



## Leave and family responsibilities







## 5.1 Introduction

At present, family leave policy is a widely discussed policy issue. Although the debate is ongoing, many countries report that significant changes in this area have marked recent years and will continue to be introduced in the near future<sup>(1)</sup>. Policy reform aims at three things mainly: increase the scope of leave entitlements, extend fathers' rights and allow for more flexibility in terms of leave take-up (Moss and Wall 2007).

There are numerous examples. In Germany, whereas paid parental leave was shortened, the level of payment was pulled up and fathers were given more incentives to take up their share of leave. So far leaves in all their possible forms remain to be taken primarily by women. Within this general framework, economic literature shows that the impact of birth leaves on mothers' labour supply is very ambiguous. In general, there exists agreement on the fact that a well organised maternity leave offering a high replacement income strengthens mothers' labour market attachment in the short run.

However, as birth leaves, be it maternity or parental leaves, become long, they risk jeopardizing women's long-run employment perspectives, particularly in terms of promotion and on-the-job training opportunities, which in turn will decrease their earning capacity. Indeed, in both countries, maternity leave was extended. On the contrary, as in Germany, father incentives were strengthened in Spain with the introduction of 15 days of paid paternity leave. Recent developments of leave systems throughout Europe illustrate that different approaches are being adopted across countries. Some develop towards a system of leave via individualised savings schemes whereas others prefer to increase the level of leave payment. An example of the former is the Netherlands whereas Germany follows the latter logic.

This chapter aims at presenting the current leave systems of all Member States of the EU, Norway and Iceland. Maternity, paternity and parental leaves are analysed in terms of a wide set of components such as entitlement criteria, length of leave, payment level, and so forth.

<sup>(1)</sup> The legal framework is still likely to evolve, following the new proposal of revision of 1992 EU directive on maternity leave (see <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=89&newsId=402&furtherNews=yes>) and the European social partners decision to negotiate a revision of the existing EU 1996 directive on parental leave that followed the consultation of the European social partners (see [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/gender\\_equality/legislation/new\\_legislation\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/gender_equality/legislation/new_legislation_en.html))

## 5.2 Maternity / Paternity leave

### 5.2.1 Length of leave and financial benefits

Different regulatory settings for maternity leave according to two basic criteria are compared: (i) the length of the leave and (ii) the replacement rate of earnings during the leave. A combination of these two indicators yields a third one, full-time equivalent (FTE) paid maternity leave. Moreover, attention is given to two other aspects of maternity/paternity leave systems, the length of the qualification period and other eligibility conditions on the one hand and the degree to which one's job and pension is protected during the leave on the other. Indeed, the right to maternity leave (mostly payment) is in some countries made conditional upon a former period of employment or payment of social contributions. Therefore, the shorter this period, the more limited access to maternity leave will be.

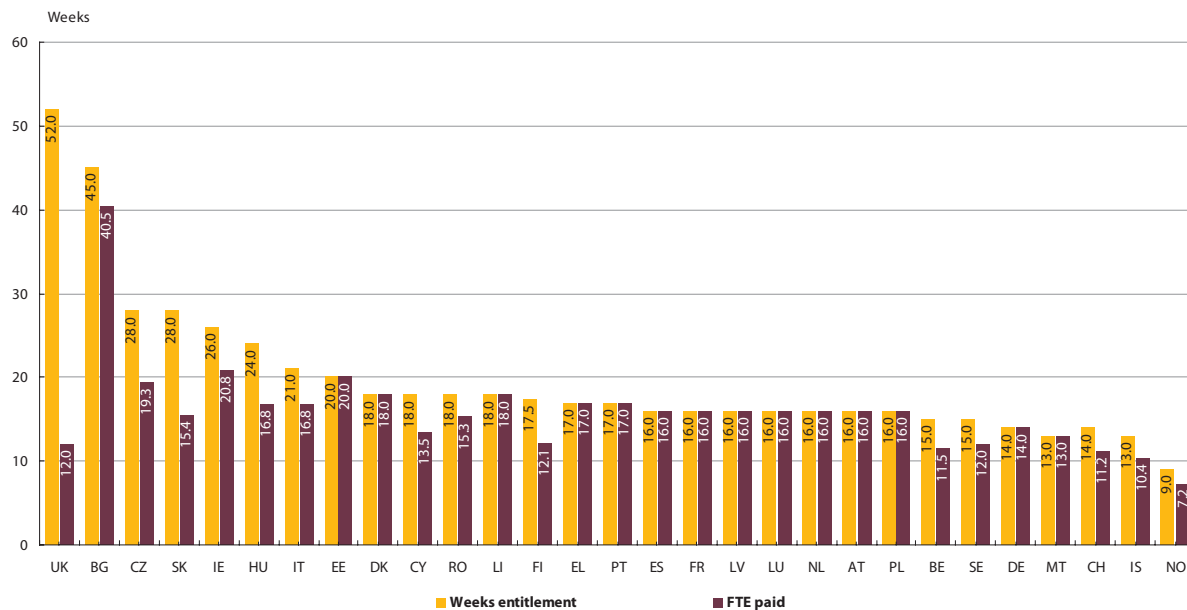
The length of maternity leave is necessarily equal to or above fourteen weeks, the minimum period required by EU legislation, which is believed to be the necessary minimum in medical terms to allow mothers to fully recover after childbirth. In 2007, all EU-27 Member States offer a longer leave than that set forward by the European Commission, except for Germany and Malta (Figure 5.1). Iceland, Norway and Switzerland also offer shorter leaves.

The length of leave needs to be compared with the level of wage replacement. The replacement rate is quite high in most countries (Figure 5.1), except in the United Kingdom where it is lower than 50 per cent and Slovakia where it is at 55 per cent of previous earnings.

The length of the leave and the replacement rate can be combined to obtain a new indicator that expresses the maternity leave in an equivalent number of working days that are fully paid. In roughly half of all Member States, the entire

leave is fully paid and thus available leave and fully paid leave coincide. Even in the Southern European countries maternity leaves are long (but not too long to harm mothers' future employment perspectives and conditions) and associated with a high level of payment. On the contrary, countries such as the United Kingdom, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic offer a long leave but a large part of which is not compensated. For example, in the UK, earnings-related payments last for 6 weeks, with a further 33 weeks of benefit payment at a flat-rate, leaving the remaining 13 weeks unpaid (Moss and Wall 2007). However, it is not a general fact that countries offering a long maternity leave are those for which the difference between the available and the fully paid leave is largest. Indeed, Bulgaria is at the top with 45 weeks of maternity leave and during the whole of this period the wage replacement rate is at 90 per cent.

Countries further diverge in terms of the organism responsible for the payment of maternity leave. In most countries, maternity leave is funded by social security contributions, mostly health insurance (in the Netherlands, maternity leaves are paid as unemployment benefits). However, in some countries tax revenue is called upon to finance the maternity leave system. This is for example the case in Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. Finally, it may be the employer who is responsible for earnings replacement during the period of maternity leave. This is a feature of the Danish system. Such a financial organisation entails a substantial cost for employers who might be tempted to pass it on to women in the form of a lower wage. Employers' intervention in maternity leave payment may therefore be regarded as a tax on female labour (OECD 2002, 2007).

**Figure 5.1:** Child-related maternity leave periods, 2007

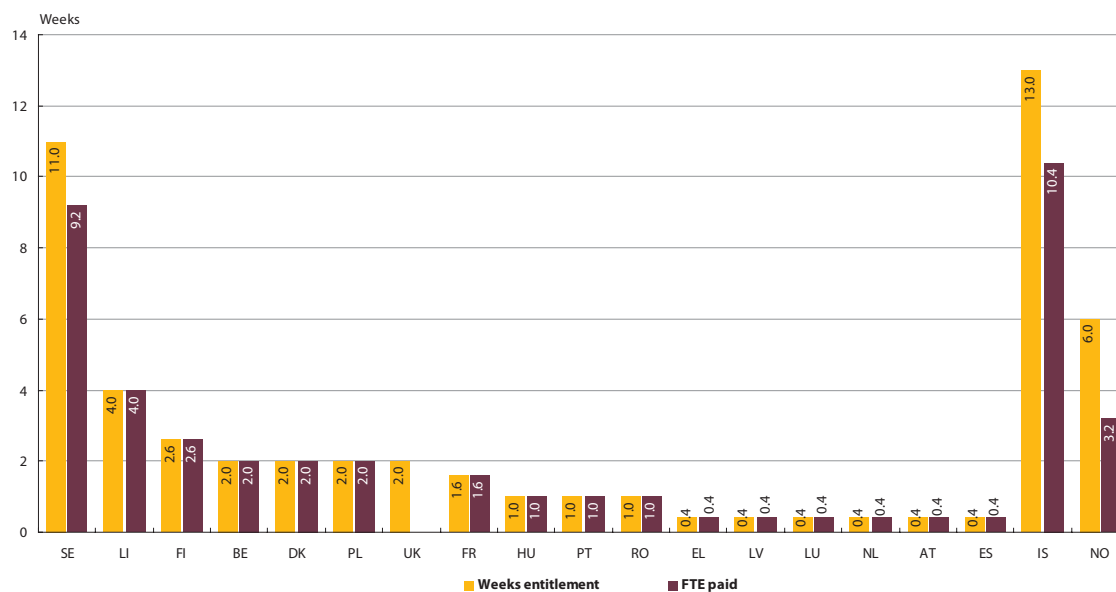
Note: Child-related maternity leave periods by duration of unpaid leave and the duration of the full-time equivalent of the leave period if paid at 100% of last earnings, situation as of 01.07.2007 – FTE: Full Time Equivalent.

Sources: OECD, MISSOC database, "Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries," section on leave facilities.

For fathers, still not all countries offer paternity leaves. As of mid 2007, there was no general statutory entitlement to paternity leave in Ireland, Poland, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Cyprus, Malta, and Slovakia, i.e. 9 out of 27 Member States offer no paternity leave as such. There is no statutory right to paternity leave in Austria either but collective agreements may provide a few days off for fathers immediately after the birth of a child. During this leave earnings are fully replaced. In Poland, fathers can take part of the maternity leave. The mother has to take 14 weeks but the

remaining 2-4 weeks may be taken by the father<sup>(2)</sup>. At the present, there is no legal entitlement to Paternity leave in Ireland, and it is provided only at the employer's own discretion. A paid paternity leave of 10 calendar days is granted to Latvian fathers. In the remaining countries, paternity leave varies between 2 days of paid leave in Greece and the Netherlands and 28 days (in Lithuania). In Iceland fathers are entitled to a 3-month paternity leave and in Norway they can take the so-called "daddy days", two weeks after birth.

<sup>(2)</sup> 2 weeks in the case of a first birth and 4 in the case of subsequent births.

**Figure 5.2:** Child-related paternity leave periods, 2007

Notes: Child-related paternity leave periods by duration of unpaid leave and the duration of the full-time equivalent of the leave period if paid at 100% of last earnings, situation as of 01.07.2007 – FTE: Full Time Equivalent.

Sources: OECD, MISSOC database, "Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries", section on leave facilities.

As for maternity leave, information regarding the length of the paternity leave and the wage replacement rate could be combined to obtain the equivalent of the leave in fully paid working days. Given that in most countries fathers are paid their usual wages during paternity leave, available length and fully paid leave tend to be identical. There are exceptions to this overall rule. In Belgium, there are 10 days of paternity leave, three of which are compulsory with full earnings replacement. For the remaining 7 days, Health Insurance replaces 82% of earnings. Figure 5.2 is thus a bit misleading in this sense. It could also be slightly confusing as regards the Finnish "father's month". In Finland, during the whole period of paternity leave, an earnings-related benefit is paid that amounts to 70% of annual earnings with a lower percentage for earnings above a given ceiling. In Iceland, the 3-month paternity leave is paid at 80% of earnings up to a ceiling (which exists in most countries) and only to those who have been in the workforce during the preceding 24 months. In Norway, following a birth, fathers are entitled to two weeks of leave, the so-called "daddy days". These are not paid by the government so that pay entirely depends on individual or collective agreements. In Sweden, payment of paternity leave

corresponds to 80% of earnings. The two weeks of paternity leave in the UK give rise to a flat-rate payment of approximately EUR 165 a week. Such a form of payment exists also in Estonia where during 14 days fathers receive a daily benefit of EUR 4.2. Finally, in Latvia, the benefit paid for the whole period of paternity leave is equal to 80% of the insured's average earnings during the last 6 months. The benefit is payable for 10 consecutive days.

A combined look at the data on maternity and paternity leaves allows some general conclusions. The lengthy maternity leave may have an impact on women's labour market perspectives in countries such as the UK, Bulgaria, Ireland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Moreover, with the exception of the UK, these countries combine a long maternity leave with no paternity leave whatsoever. In general, it seems that, from a gender point of view, maternity and paternity leaves are far from being equal in length in all countries. There is a non-EU exception to this, Iceland, where maternity and paternity leave are entirely identical, 13 weeks and with a high level of payment (80% of earnings).

**Table 5.1:** Employment-protected statutory maternity and paternity leave arrangements

	Maternity Leave	% rate of allowance	FTE paid maternity leave*	Paternity leave	% rate of allowance	FTE paid paternity leave*
BE	15 weeks	82/75 <sup>(1)</sup>	11.53	2 weeks	100	2.0
BG	315 days (45 weeks)	90	40.5	:	:	:
CZ	28 weeks	69	19.32	:	:	:
DK	18 weeks	100 of wage with max 459 EUR/week	18	2 weeks	100	2
DE	14 weeks	100	14	:	:	:
EE	140 days ( 20 weeks)	100	20	:	:	:
IE	26 weeks	80	20.8	:	:	:
EL	17 weeks	100 % with max (no dependants): EUR 45.18 per day and max. (4 dependants): EUR 63.26 per day.	17	0.4 weeks	100	0.4
ES	16 weeks	100	16	0.4 weeks	100	0.4
FR	16 weeks	100% with a max. 71.80 EUR/day	16	11 days (1.6 weeks)	100%, with a max. of 71.80 EUR/day	1.6
IT	21 weeks (5 months)	80	16.8	:	:	:
CY	18 weeks	75	13.5	:	:	:
LV	112 days (16 weeks)	100	16	10 days (0.4 weeks)	100	0.4
LT	18 weeks	100	18	4 weeks	100	4
LU	16 weeks	100	16	0.4 weeks	100	0.4
HU	24 weeks	70	16.8	1 week	100	1
MT	13 weeks	100	13	:	:	:
NL	16 weeks	100	16	0.4 weeks	100	0.4
AT	16 weeks	100	16	0.4 weeks	100	0.4
PL	16 weeks	100	16	2 weeks	100	2
PT	17 weeks	100	17	1 week	100	1.0
RO	126 days (18 weeks)	85	15.3	1 week	100	1
SI	:	:	:	:	:	:
SK	28 weeks	55	15.4	:	:	:
FI	105 days (around 17.5 weeks)	90/70 <sup>(2)</sup>	12.1	18 days (2.6 weeks)	100	2.6
SE	15 weeks	80	12	11 weeks	100/80 <sup>(3)</sup>	9.2
UK	26 weeks for all the women and 26 weeks if employed for 26 weeks with same employer	90 for the first 6 weeks - 20 weeks at flat rate of 167 EUR/week (4)	12	2 weeks	167 EUR/week or 90% of earnings if this is less	:
IS	13 weeks	80	10.4	13 weeks	80	10.4
NO	9 weeks	80	7.2	6 weeks	80	3.2
CH	14 weeks	80	11.2	:	:	:

Notes: situation as of 01.07.2007.

(1) Paid at 82% for first 4 weeks and 75% for the remaining 11.

(2) Paid at 90% (of earned income up to 45.221 € annual) for first 56 days and 70% (of earned income up to 29.392 € annual) for the remaining 49.

(3) Calculated at 100% for the first 2 weeks and then at 80%.

(4) Calculated at 90% for initial 6 weeks and then flat rate (approx. 33% of average wage) for 20 weeks, 26 weeks is unpaid.

\* Full Time Equivalent (FTE) = Duration of leave in weeks \* payment (as per cent of APW earnings) received by the claimant.

Sources: OECD, MISSOC database, "Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries", section on leave facilities.



## 5.2.2 Eligibility conditions and job/pension protection

### Eligibility conditions

In most countries, there is a statutory right to maternity leave. In Iceland and Sweden, such a right does not exist. In these countries, leave is available at the time of birth but it is not restricted to mothers, being subsumed into the parental leave scheme. Whether or not a statutory right to maternity leave exists, eligibility is generally made conditional upon meeting a number of qualifying requirements. Most often, only women who have been in some form of economic activity before birth or who have paid social security contributions during a given period prior to delivery are eligible. The more these qualifying conditions are tough, the more access to maternity leave will be restricted. There is just one country where there are no qualifying conditions at all: Romania.

The strictest conditions are observed in France, Ireland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Sweden where a mother needs to have worked for more than 240 days before the expected date of delivery. In Greece, the insured woman must have 200 days of contributions in the last 2 years (Moss and Wall 2007). In Norway, Hungary, Portugal<sup>(3)</sup>, Luxembourg, Bulgaria, and Cyprus, the qualification period is around 6 months (Moss and Wall 2007, Prechal et al. 2007, Beleva 2005, Panayiotou 2005).

In contrast, qualifying conditions are easier to meet in Denmark, where, unlike in many other Member States (e.g. Poland, Belgium, Estonia, Hungary), maternity leave entitlement is not restricted to employees and self-employed workers<sup>(4)</sup>. Indeed, even people on a vocational training or students are eligible. However, previous employment conditions differ according to professional status. The Danish maternity leave system is thus a very encompassing one (Moss and Wall 2007).

A less complex but just as encompassing system is in place in Finland and Malta where entitlements are based on residence only. Conversely, in Lithuania, only workers have a right to leave and payment is based on the social security contributions (Prechal et al. 2007, US Social Security Administration 2006). In the Netherlands, eligibility was tightened recently, and since August 2004, self-employed women are no longer included. In Germany, self-employed workers are eligible (benefits are paid on the basis of the average monthly net income in the calendar year preceding the year of birth) while all women employees, including part-time workers have a right to maternity leave (Moss and Wall 2007).

In Austria female part-time workers may be penalised. Indeed, short-time employed women and free-lance workers are eligible only if they have a voluntarily health-insurance. In Estonia, women with temporary contracts are eligible if they are employed for more than three months (Prechal et al. 2007).

In a number of countries, professional status and the length of employment prior to childbirth are not taken into account and all employees and self-employed workers are entitled to maternity leave. This is the case in Italy, Estonia, Latvia, Iceland, Austria, Poland, and Slovenia<sup>(5)</sup> (Moss and Wall 2007, Prechal et al. 2007).

In Spain, all employed women are entitled to maternity leave (flat-rate payment for 42 days after delivery), but specific conditions must be met to qualify for the earnings-related maternity leave benefit. Similarly, in the UK, all women employees are eligible for 26 weeks 'Ordinary Maternity Leave' (OML) plus a further 26 weeks of 'Additional Maternity Leave' (AML) (Moss and Wall 2007).

<sup>(3)</sup> Self-employed workers who contribute to social security and unemployed women receiving unemployment benefit are also entitled.

<sup>(4)</sup> Note that in the Netherlands, even the self-employed are excluded. In Belgium, self-employed workers can take maternity leave but have a separate system which is less advantageous compared with employees.

<sup>(5)</sup> All women are entitled to leave but payment depends on the number of months prior to birth during which social contributions were paid.



## Employment and pension rights' protection

In terms of dismissal, most countries provide a very strong protection and in some countries the prohibition against the dismissal of a pregnant worker or a person on maternity leave is close to absolute. In other words, there are a limited and exhaustive number of specific reasons that are accepted in order to dismiss a pregnant worker or a worker on maternity leave. In Bulgaria, for instance, a pregnant woman can only be dismissed if the enterprise goes bankrupt. The dismissal of a pregnant worker or a woman on maternity leave is even sometimes presumed unlawful. In some countries, the restriction on dismissing workers has been extended beyond the period of maternity leave, until the child has reached a certain age (Prechal et al. 2007).

In most States, a worker returning to work after her maternity leave is protected not only against dismissal but also against unfavourable treatment. Workers are generally guaranteed by law to return to the same job or, if this is not possible, to a similar job. However, a few countries do not provide such a guarantee.

In some countries, pregnant women are not permitted to work at night. This prohibition is sometimes also extended to the period of breastfeeding.

In terms of pensions, in most countries, leaves are regarded as active services and thus pension rights continue to accumulate. Leave time is taken into account for the purposes of promotions and pensions (Prechal et al. 2007).

### 5.2.3 Supplementary provisions: Maternity allowances and birth grants

Besides wage-related compensation during statutory maternity leave, 10 of the 14 EU Member States for which the OECD provides data offer a maternity allowance. In Germany, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Austria, Slovakia, Slovenia and the UK (but also in Norway), this maternity allowance is aimed at women who are not entitled to statutory maternity leave because they are self-employed, unemployed, and so forth. This allowance is usually means-tested and is granted as a social assistance measure for which no social contributions need to have been paid in advance.

There is great disparity between countries as to the amount of this allowance and the period over which it is paid. With the exception of Sweden and the United Kingdom where it is wage-related, this allowance takes the form of a lump-sum

amount. It is highest in Belgium (EUR 889 per month in 2006) and Luxembourg (EUR 740 per month in 2006) and much lower in all other countries.

A birth grant is offered in 12 of the 14 countries for which data are available. Only in Austria and Sweden does such a grant not exist. Again there are some noticeable differences in the way this birth grant is conceived across the countries. It may be means-tested or based on previous work and thus social contribution payments. It may be offered for all children or just from the third child onwards. There is also great variety in the amount of the grant. Clearly, Luxembourg and Italy stand out from the other countries with a birth grant to the amount of EUR 1 740 and 1 813 respectively. Least generous are Poland and Slovakia.

**Table 5.2: Maternity allowance and maternity grants 2005/2006**

	Allowance			Grant		
	Allowance	Eligibility	Details	Grant	Eligibility	Details
<b>BE</b>	Yes	Self employed maternity leave	EUR 889 p/m for three months	Yes	Birth grant	EUR 945 for first child EUR 711 for subsequent children
<b>DE</b>	Yes	To women not entitled to statutory maternity allowance	EUR 210 per month	Yes	'Entbindungsgeld' for mothers in statutory maternity leave	
<b>EL</b>	Yes	Not entitled to social insurance. Means tested State aid.	500 euros in two parts (half for a period of 42 days before birth, half for the 42 days after birth)	Yes	Insured mothers having worked at least 50 days in the year before birth	30 days minimum wage (but amounts vary highly in other social security regimes)
<b>ES</b>	No	-	-	Yes	Birth of third or more children and multiple births, income-related child benefit EUR 450	
<b>FR</b>	Yes, No in 2004	Means tested (around 80% of families are eligible)	During 9 months from the 5th month of pregnancy; EUR 168 per month	No, Yes in 2004	New scheme in 2004, means-tested, such as to include 90% of families	EUR 840 once at birth
<b>IT</b>	Yes	No employment records and not entitled to statutory maternity leave Means tested at household level	238 euros per month during 5 months for each child born or adopted (EUR 1419 in total). Paid by State through municipality	Yes	To employed and atypical workers not entitled to statutory maternity leave (also to a certain extent to those entitled)	EUR 1 740 paid by health insurance
<b>LU</b>	Yes	Not entitled to insured maternity benefit.	Allowance paid for 16 weeks, Non-cumulative with similar benefits (185 per week)	Yes	Mother and child have medical examination	EUR 1 740 divided into three: EUR 512 lump sums: prenatal, birth and postnatal (child's 2nd birthday)
<b>HU</b>	No			Yes		
<b>AT</b>		Women not covered by statutory maternity (1) Self employment in agriculture, trade and industry ; (2) others (part time, contract workers)	(1) EUR 23 per day for 16 weeks leave in order to hire a substitute (2) EUR 6,91 per day for 16 weeks	No		
<b>PL</b>	Yes	Social assistance recipients	Four first months of child's life Minimum: PLN 50 per month	Yes	Social assistance recipients (in the past: all mothers)	EUR 129 (one time childbirth benefit)
<b>SK</b>	Yes	Women not entitled to paid statutory maternity leave	Paid leave (lower amount)	Yes	For each child born	Lump sum payment EUR 118
<b>FI</b>	No	-	-	Yes	All residents (pregnancy over 154 days)	Choice between a generous maternity pack or lump sum payment (EUR 140)
<b>SE</b>	Yes	Pregnancy leave	80% pay up to maximum (see tables on maternity and parental leave)	No	-	-
<b>UK</b>	Yes	Employed or self employed for a certain period and not entitled to statutory maternity pay or under min. earnings requirements	26 weeks: 90% of av. weekly earnings up to a max. of £100/week	Yes	Either partners getting income support, income based jobseeker's allowance, Child Tax Credit, Working Tax Credit	Lump sum payment: EUR 728. Can claim from the 30th week of pregnancy until 3 months after
<b>NO</b>	No	-	-	Yes	Women not entitled to statutory parental leave (3)	NOK 33584 (around 4077 euros)

Notes: Measures in place of or in supplement to statutory maternity pay - Maternity allowance: amount of money paid at interval for a certain period after a child is born - Maternity grant: lump sum amount paid once or around the childbirth.

Source: OECD.

## 5.3 Parental leave

The European Commission has emphasised that parental leave is a key component of a strategy aimed at facilitating the work/life balance. Indeed, in 1996, the EC issued a Directive (EC/34/EC) requiring Member States to offer at least three months (following the birth of a child) of parental leave to all employees. Such a leave is to be added to a minimum of fourteen weeks of maternity leave granted by 1992 EU Directive.

This forms part of the Directive concerning equal opportunities for men and women that is concerned with mothers' integration in the labour market and men's in the family sphere.

Following the 1996 EU directive on parental leave, the EU definition leaves enough room for each Member State to implement its own rules in terms of leave duration, payment, flexibility, and so forth. Table 5.3 provides information on the different legal frameworks for parental leave in Europe (basically applicable to employees).

**Table 5.3:** Employment-protected statutory parental leave arrangements, 2007

	Parental leave	% rate of allowance	FTE paid parental leave*	Parental leave (unpaid)	Total parental leave	Payment
BE	12 weeks (i) (3 months)	20	2.4	:	26 weeks (6 months)	Flat rate: + 550 EUR/month
BG	24 month (f) incl. maternity leave	:	:	:	24 months	Minimum wage level
CZ	156 days (f)	10	15.6	:	156 days	113 EUR/month
DK	32 weeks (i)	90 of wage limited to 32 weeks	28.8	:	64 weeks	:
DE	156 weeks (f) (36 months)	11	17.16	:	:	Max 300 EUR/month/child (first 24 months) or 450 EUR/month/child (12 first months)
EE	239 days (f) (34 weeks)	100% with min. and max.	34	:	239 days (34 weeks)	:
IE	14 weeks (i)	:	:	28 weeks	28 weeks	:
EL	14 weeks (i) (3.5 months)	:	:	28 weeks	7 months	:
ES	156 weeks (f) (36 months)	:	:	156 weeks (f) (36 months)	136 months	:
FR	156 weeks (f) (36 months)	25.8	40.2	:	36 months	:
IT	11 months (when father takes 3 months)	30	13.2	:	:	:
CY	13 weeks (i)	:	:	:	26 weeks	unpaid
LV	36 months (f) (incl. maternity leave)	:	:	:	36 months	Flat rate payment, 15 LVL/ month
LT	36 months (f) (including maternity leave)	70	109.2	:	36 months	
LU	26 weeks (i) (6 months)	62	16.12	:	52 weeks	Minimum wage (1 840 EUR/month)
HU	104 weeks (up to a child's 2nd birthday) (f)	70	72.8	:	104 weeks (Up to a child's 2nd birthday) (f)	:
MT	3 months (i)	:	:	6 months	6 months	:
NL	13 weeks (i)	:	:	26 weeks	26 weeks	:
AT	104 weeks (2 years)	21	21.84	:	24 months	436 EUR/month for 18 months. If fathers take part of leave, payment up to 24 months
PL	156 weeks (f) (36 months)	14.6	22.7	:		:
PT	26 weeks (i) (6 months)	:	:	26 weeks	12 months	:
RO	24 months (maternity leave incl.)	80	76.8	:	24 months	:
SI	:	:	:	:	:	:
SK	156 weeks (f) (36 months)	24	37.44	:	36 months	:
FI	26 weeks (158 days)	75/70 (†)	25.6	:	:	:
SE	68 weeks (480 days)	390 days: 80% - 90 days: 60 EUR/day	44.5	:	480 days	:
UK	13 weeks (i)	:	:	26 weeks	26 weeks	:
IS	13 weeks (3 months)	80	10.4	:	:	:
NO	44 weeks	100	44	:	:	:

Notes: Situation as of 01.07.2007 - (†) Paid at 75% (of earned income up to 45221 € (annual) for first 30 days and 70% (of earned income up to 29392 € (annual) for the remaining 128 - \*Full Time Equivalent (FTE) = Duration of leave in weeks x payment (as per cent of APW earnings) received by the claimant - (f) family right (i) individual.

Sources: OECD, MISSOC database, "Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries," section on leave facilities.

As for maternity and paternity leaves, parental leaves are discussed from two angles: duration and payment. However, job protection and the guarantee of pension and seniority rights during the leave will also be discussed, as well as the proportion of leave that can be transferred between parents and the part reserved for the father only, the possibilities to divide the leave, and the child's upper age limit at which the right to parental leave expires.

### 5.3.1 Length and benefits

Length of parental leave substantially differs across countries: from the minimum period required by the EC directive of three months per parent (Belgium, Cyprus, Ireland, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the UK) to leaves up until the child's 3rd birthday (the Czech Republic, Germany, Estonia, Spain, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland, and Slovakia).

The way the leave is available to each parent plays a key role through potential incentives for fathers to take up part of the leave. The right to leave can be individual (Benelux, Anglo-Saxon countries, Mediterranean countries, France, Romania, Cyprus and Malta) or family-based (remaining countries). In case parental leave is an individual right, each parent is entitled to a period of leave that is not transferable to the spouse. In other words, if a parent does not take the leave to which he/she is entitled, it is lost for the family. In case entitlement is family-based, parental leave is a family right and can be shared by both parents more or less freely depending on the country (see below).

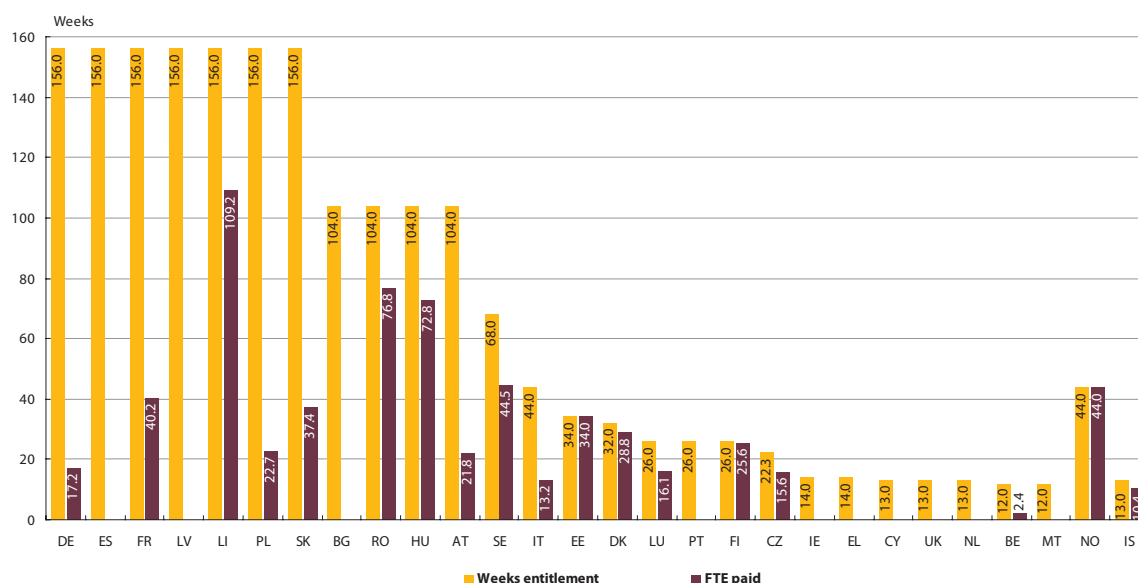
Besides these two particular cases, some countries have introduced a mixture of individual and family-based rights. In Hungary and the Czech Republic, the right to leave is individual but payment is family-based. In the Czech Republic parents can alternate or take leave together but only one parent receives the parental allowance. Similarly, in Hungary, each parent is entitled to unpaid leave but when the mother is on leave and receives the childcare allowance then the father can only take unpaid leave. In Italy, each parent is entitled to six months with a maximum of ten months per family but, as soon as the father takes at least three months, he is entitled to an additional month bringing his total leave right to seven months. However, the right to benefits is limited to six months and is family-based. In Norway, Iceland, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Lithuania, entitlement to parental leave is family-based but with individual quota's for one or both parents.

In case entitlement is family-based, the degree of flexibility as to how parents can share the leave depends on the country. In Germany, where parental leave is very long, parents can either take leave together or alternate in taking leave (as in Finland, each parent can take up to 2 periods of leave). In

Empirical and theoretical findings advanced in the economic literature agree on the fact that parental leave can be characterised by a gender bias that strengthens the traditional role models of mothers and fathers and as such, may have a negative impact on mothers' participation and career prospects. Different features of the leave are related to this issue and will be discussed in detail.

Austria, the whole leave can be split into 3 parts at most so that parents can alternate taking leave to some extent. However, unlike in Germany, they cannot take leave simultaneously (except for 1 month). In Denmark, parents freely choose whether to take leave separately or jointly. In Estonia, parents can alternate as often as they like but should inform their employer 15 days ahead. In Spain as well leave can be taken in as many blocks as desired without minimum period. Such flexibility in leave-sharing is discussed in greater detail below.

Another important issue is the payment policy during the various available periods of leave. Some countries do not grant any replacement income during the leave (Greece, Spain (although some regions offer some form of financial compensation), Ireland, the Netherlands (although collective agreements may confer some earnings-related payment), Portugal (except for 15 daddy days), the UK, Cyprus, and Malta). Half of the remaining countries pay a flat-rate amount (Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, and Slovakia), which, except for Denmark and Luxembourg, is lower than half the National Average Female Earnings. A wage-related payment, as in Germany, Estonia, Iceland, Lithuania, Latvia, Norway, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden or Finland (the same logic underlies the Italian system but the wage replacement rate is much lower – although on average higher than in many other countries), helps to weaken the effect of the wage differential between women and men which weighs negatively on mothers' employment when households decide which partner should take parental leave. The issue of the intra-household gender wage gap is linked to that of the overall gender wage gap: if the first gap partly explains why women take up parental leave more often than their partners (on top of other reasons), their more prevalent career interruptions then form part of the causes of the second gap, as shown by many empirical studies, and as such reinforce the incentive for families to let leave take-up be gender unbalanced. Note that in Germany only the first year of leave (parental leave lasts for 3 years) gives rise to earnings replacement. This provides parents with quite an incentive to opt for a shorter leave, although childcare options afterwards are limited.

**Figure 5.3:** Child-related parental leave periods, 2007

Note: Child-related parental leave periods by duration of unpaid leave and the duration of the full-time equivalent (FTE) of the leave period if paid at 100% of last earnings, situation as of 01.07.2007.

Sources: OECD, MISSOC database, "Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries", section on leave facilities.

Parental leave payment is often regressive in time (especially Finland and Lithuania but also Sweden). Portugal applies an unusual type of father incentive. Fathers taking parental leave immediately after maternity leave or immediately following the fifth day of paternity leave are paid 100 per cent of their earnings during the first fifteen working days ("daddy days"),

while mothers are not paid at all when on parental leave.

In Germany, parental leave payment (Elterngeld) takes the form of a "parental" wage because it is open to all parents, whether at work or not, as long as they are not employed for more than 30 hours a week.

### 5.3.2 Timing and fractionability

Flexibility as regards take-up of parental leave is understood in three ways:

- (i) parental leave becomes more flexible as the limit on the child's age before which leave must be taken increases;
- (ii) parental leave becomes more flexible as the number of fractions in which it can be taken up grows;
- (iii) parental leave becomes more flexible as it can be taken up at a part-time rate allowing parents to keep working reduced hours.

In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, Estonia, Lithuania, Denmark, Austria, Spain, Finland, and France, parental leave policies emphasise the fact that parents should be able to care for their children themselves in their first years of life. Leave needs to be taken immediately following childbirth. Note that in Austria 6 months (3 by each parent) of the 2-year parental leave can be saved up to use after the child's 2nd birthday and before it reaches 7 years of age. Similarly in Denmark, 8-13 weeks can be postponed until

the child's 9th birthday. In Greece, the same logic is followed but leave is much shorter (3.5 months). In Iceland, the 9 months of parental leave need to be taken before the child reaches 18 months. In Poland, the 36-month parental leave needs to be taken before the child's 4th birthday. In the remaining countries, the age limit is much higher, up to 8 years in Sweden, Italy, the Netherlands, Ireland, Latvia, Malta and Germany.



Most leaves are fractionable (meaning they can be split into different periods across time) but to different degrees. For example, in France, leave has to be taken in periods of at least one year (9 months in Poland) while in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Spain, and Sweden, leave can be taken by the day. Take-up by the day is also possible in Slovenia but then the total duration of leave is shortened by 30%. Leave can be split in blocks with a minimum period of one week of leave in Denmark, Cyprus (maximum 4 weeks of leave can be taken per year), and the UK. In Finland, the minimum period is 12 days. Leave can be taken by the month in Belgium (if it is taken at a full-time rate), the Netherlands, Portugal, Germany, Hungary and Slovakia. In Ireland, parents should at least take 6 weeks at a time. Finally, blocks of at least three months should be taken in Austria and Poland. To sum up, there is just one country where parental leave is not fractionable: in Malta it has to be taken as a continuous block. In a number of countries, the right to split parental leave is a conditional one, depending on the employer's agreement (e.g. Iceland, the Netherlands).

In most countries, leave can be taken on a part-time basis (with a proportional extension of its duration). There are a number of exceptions: Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Hungary, Greece, Malta and Romania. This part-time take-up possibility exists in order to avoid that parents become totally

disconnected from the labour market. Nevertheless, the extent of flexibility varies greatly across countries. For example, in Luxembourg, it is only possible to take half-time leave (i.e. in half days) whereas in Belgium parents can reduce their working hours by 50% or by 80%, so that they may take one day of parental leave per week. In Spain, daily working time can be reduced by between 30 and 50%, in Finland by 40-60% and in Sweden hours can be reduced to  $\frac{3}{4}$ ,  $\frac{1}{2}$ ,  $\frac{1}{4}$ , or  $\frac{1}{8}$  with corresponding benefit. Similar more flexible formulas of this kind further exist in Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland and Iceland. In Denmark, parental leave could initially be taken only on a part-time basis in order to ensure that parents continuously stayed in touch with the labour market. In 1997, this measure was revised and hence it is possible to take periods of full-time leave provided the employer agrees (Bruning and Plantenga 1999).

In Poland, one can work while on leave but then one cannot claim the parental allowance. On the contrary, in the Czech Republic, parents are allowed to work part-time while they are on full-time parental leave and receive the parental allowance. In Hungary, to receive the child care allowance parents cannot engage in work until the child reaches 1 year but work may be performed without time restrictions if the child is older than one year.

### 5.3.3 Employment protection and safeguard of pension rights

The 1996 European Directive on parental leave requires that a job guarantee be offered, that is the right to return to the same or an equivalent job. This is a very important issue. If a parent's employment contract is merely suspended but not terminated then social security contributions continue to be paid during parental leave so that once the leave has ended, he or she can return to his or her previous job and the leave will not have affected pension rights. Such job and pension protection is provided by most national legislations. However, there are a few striking exceptions. In Austria, dismissal protection is granted for 24 months only, whereas the leave may be extended up to 30 months. This may go against the right to return to the same or equivalent work. In Spain, during the first year of parental leave, return to the same job position is guaranteed. After the first year, job protection is restricted to a job of the same category. As regards pension rights, they continue to accumulate during the first 2 years of parental leave only. In France, during parental leave, the employment contract is suspended without any special

protection against dismissal. However, after parental leave, the worker has the right to return to the same job or, if this is not possible, to an equivalent or similar job, where the same advantages as before apply. In Ireland, the right to return to one's job is guaranteed but rights related to pay, pensions, superannuation benefits are not legally guaranteed but left to the discretion of the employer. In Malta, there is a guarantee to return to the same job after leave but parental leave does create a gap in national social insurance contributions and as such affects pensions. Finally, in Romania, only women taking parental leave are legally protected against dismissal but not men.

In sum, in most countries, parental leave cannot impact on future employment and pensions. In some countries, job and pension guarantees cover only part of the available parental leave period (e.g. Austria). Finally, job and pension protection are safeguarded legally in most countries but are left to the discretion of the employer in some (e.g. the Netherlands, Ireland).



Regarding qualification conditions, some parental leave schemes impose employment and seniority conditions, usually one year of work, most often with the same employer (Belgium, Greece, Ireland, France (only to receive the parental allowance not the flat-rate benefit), Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the UK) but sometimes only 6 months (with the same employer: Cyprus, Norway; not necessarily with the same employer: Iceland, Sweden, Poland and Portugal). A weaker condition merely stipulating that the person wanting to take a parental leave be employed exists in Austria, the

Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Spain, and Italy. A residence condition is applied in Finland and Malta. In France, qualifying conditions with respect to the flat-rate parental leave payment become stricter as the number of children decreases. More precisely, a parent needs to have worked for 2 of the 5 years preceding birth if there are 3+ children, 2 of the 4 years preceding birth if there are 2 children and 2 years of the 2 years preceding birth if there is just one child.

### 5.3.4 Take-up of parental leave and influencing factors

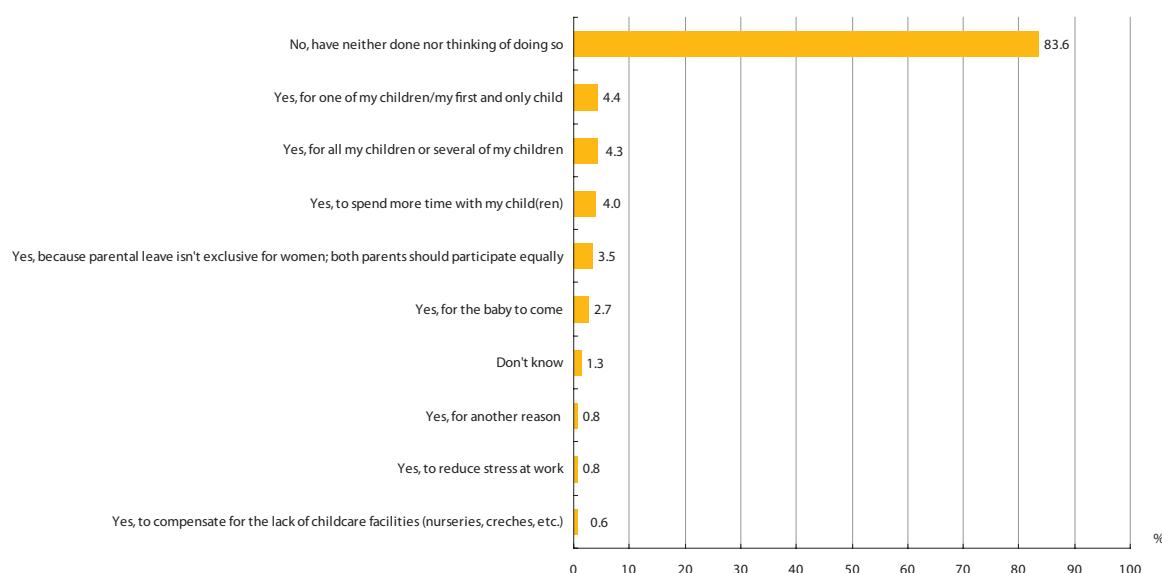
The fact that parental leave exists does not seem to be that obvious, especially not for men. A Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2003 revealed that at the EU-15 level, one quarter (25.2%) of the polled men, limited to those who already had one or more children or whose wife/partner was expecting a baby, was not aware that such an arrangement existed. Whereas the awareness of the possibility of a parental leave was very widespread in countries such as Sweden (97%), Luxembourg (94%) and Denmark (93%), only 57% of the men in Ireland and Portugal and 45% of those in Greece declared to know that this was possible.

Restricted to the same group of men (i.e. with one or more children, or wife/partner expecting a baby) the survey

furthermore revealed that at the EU-15 level, 84% did not take or did not even consider taking a parental leave. Percentages were highest in Spain and Ireland (both countries at 95%). Conversely, parental leave was most often taken in Scandinavian countries, explained by the fairly generous arrangements: in Denmark and Finland 30% and 33% of the fathers respectively indeed took a parental leave. Sweden excels here with 67% of the men taking advantage of this arrangement.

It should also be noted that percentages may total more than 100% because of the rounding up of figures or where questions allow for more than one response.

**Figure 5.4:** Incidence and reasons of men taking up parental leave, EU-15 (%)



Note: "Did you take, or are you thinking of taking up parental leave?" – Question only asked to men (over 18 years of age and not retired) with one child or more or wife/partner expecting a baby).

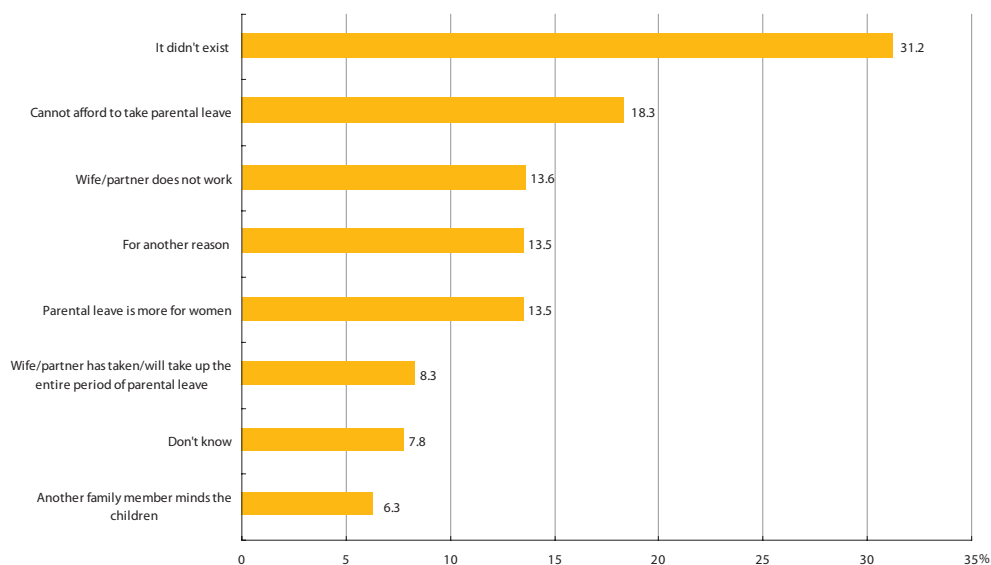
Source: Eurobarometer Survey 59.1, 2004.



When asked for the main reasons for not taking up parental leave, 31% of the men questioned at the EU-15 level responded that “it didn’t exist” (with percentages as high as approximately 50% in Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Sweden). 18% mentioned that they couldn’t afford to take a

parental leave. Parental leave is considered a ‘women’s thing’ especially in Austria (37%) and Germany (25%), contrasting sharply against the attitudes in Sweden, where only 1% of the questioned men said so (EU-15 average: 14%).

**Figure 5.5:** Reasons for men not having taken or not thinking of taking parental leave, EU-15 (%)



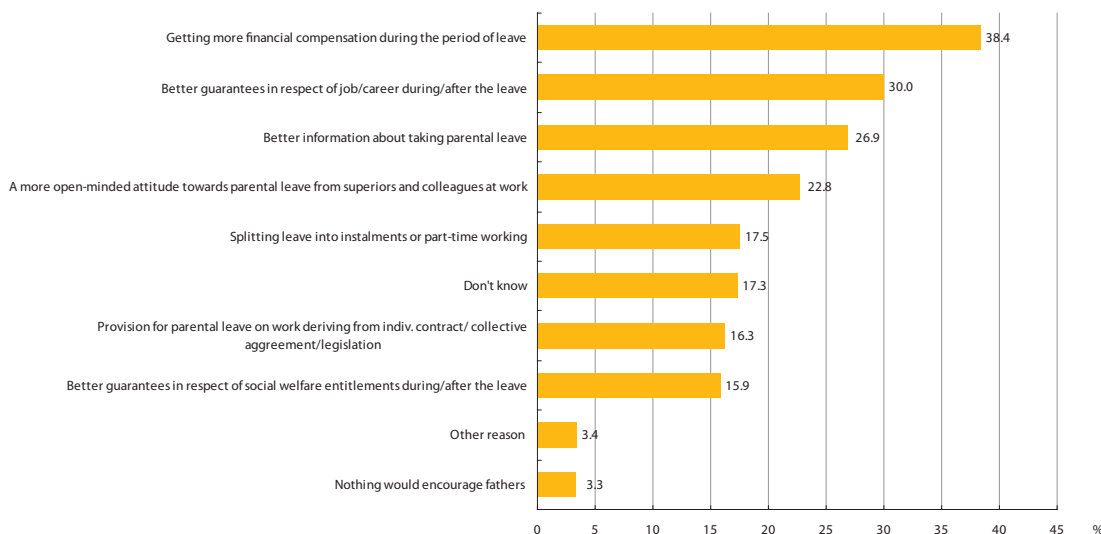
Note: “Which are the main reasons for you not taking nor thinking to take up parental leave?” Question only asked to men (over 18 years of age and not retired) with one child or more or wife/partner expecting a baby).

Source: Eurobarometer Survey 59.1, 2004.

“Getting more financial compensation during the period of leave” is definitely the main reason for encouraging fathers to take parental leave. This was mentioned by 38% of all men polled at the EU-15 level, with percentages as high as 60% in Sweden and the United Kingdom. The fear of undergoing negative job/career effects during a parental leave was an issue

for 30% of the men with relatively little variations across the individual countries. More striking is the lack of information: indeed, 27% of the men polled would feel encouraged to take parental leave if better information would be supplied. The information deficit appeared especially high in Greece (40% of the respondents) and the United Kingdom (37%).

**Figure 5.6:** Factors encouraging fathers to take parental leave, EU-15 (%)



Note: “What do you think are the main reasons that would encourage fathers to take parental leave?” - Question only asked to men over 18 years of age and not retired.

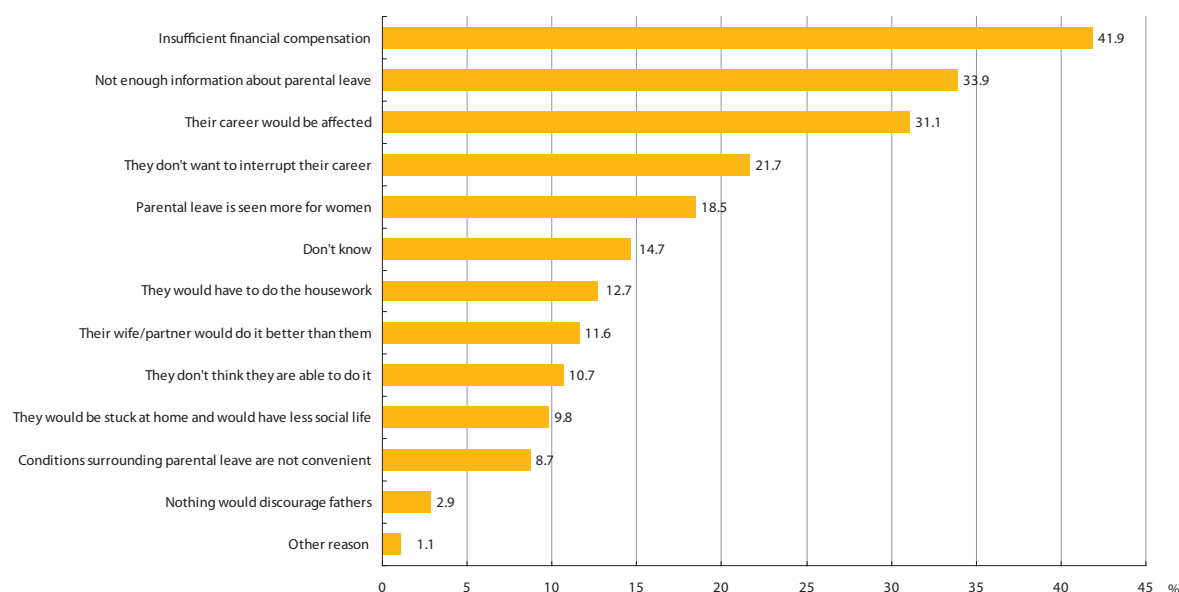
Source: Eurobarometer Survey 59.1, 2004.

Turning the question around and asking what is likely to discourage fathers to take parental leave generates broadly the same pattern, with however a number of clearer attitudes appearing. “Insufficient financial compensation” is mentioned by 42% of the EU-15 respondents, 31% think their career would be affected and 22% wouldn’t want to interrupt theirs (ranging from 7% in Portugal to 46% in Denmark). Being

stuck at home with a lack of social life or fears not to be able to assume responsibilities is less of a concern for fathers.

Again, “not enough information about parental leave” comes as the second most often mentioned element with 34%. In Greece, Italy, Portugal and the United Kingdom the information deficit appears to be highest (mentioned by between 40 and 50% of the respondents).

**Figure 5.7:** Main reasons discouraging fathers from taking parental leave, EU-15 (%)



Note: “And what do you think are the main reasons that would discourage fathers to take parental leave?” - Question only asked to men over 18 years of age and not retired.

Source: Eurobarometer Survey 59.1, 2004.

Multiple evidence exists that almost all eligible mothers make use of their right to parental leave in all countries (De Henau et al. 2007, Plantenga and Remery 2005). The question is rather that of the acute gender balance in take-up rates. If not entirely absent, men usually form at best a small minority among parental leave takers<sup>(6)</sup>.

The proportion of eligible fathers who actually take parental leave is very low in Germany, France, and Austria. In these countries, traditional family norms are still extremely binding and parental leave continues to be a woman’s affair. Fathers’ low take-up rate might also be explained by the length of the transferable period that makes it possible for mothers to take almost three years of leave so that families do not really rely on fathers.

In Austria, parental leave for fathers was introduced in 1990.

The percentage of fathers taking up parental leave was always very low but since the introduction of the childcare benefit in 2002 the percentage of fathers taking childcare benefit has slightly risen (to 3.47 per cent in 2006).

The German childrearing benefit (Elterngeld) was introduced only very recently (January 2007) so that no sufficient data are available yet as to its impact in terms of take-up of parental leave. First reports indicate however that take-up of parental leave by fathers is higher than expected, and acceptance by employers is increasing<sup>(7)</sup>.

In France, the small number of fathers who take APE (allocation parental d’éducation) are mostly blue-collar workers or employees with a stable job beforehand and likely to have partners with a higher level of education, a higher status job and higher earnings (De Henau et al. 2007, Moss and Wall 2007).

<sup>(6)</sup> Information regarding take-up of parental leave in the remainder of this section is taken from Moss and Wall (2007) except when indicated otherwise.

<sup>(7)</sup> Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (2008): Elterngeldbericht – Bericht über die Auswirkungen des Bundeselterngeld- und Elternzeitgesetzes sowie über die gegebenenfalls notwendige Weiterentwicklung. Available through: <http://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/generator/RedaktionBMFSFJ/Abteilung2/Pdf-Anlagen/elterngeldbericht-2008,property=pdf,bereich=,sprache=de,rwb=true.pdf>



In Greece and Spain, only very few fathers use their right to parental leave. In Portugal, take-up is relatively low even amongst mothers given that leave is unpaid (except for the 15 “daddy days”). In Italy, although leave is short and conceived as an individual right, the fact that replacement income is granted to the family and remains low (30 per cent) probably explains why only few entitled fathers take at least part of their leave.

In most of the countries that recently joined the EU, only few fathers took advantage of the parental benefits offered, be it because of its recent introduction, the low benefit level or because fathers taking over more family responsibilities are not yet an established role model.

In Denmark and Sweden, more men take at least part of their parental leave than in the countries presented above. In Denmark, fathers make up around 16 per cent of leave takers since 2002 but the time taken is far shorter (5.7 weeks in 2004) than that taken by women (22.6 weeks) (De Henau et al. 2007).

There is more gender balance in take-up rates in Sweden but the actual length of leave taken by fathers (28 days) as compared with mothers (109 days on average) reveals huge disparities. (De Henau et al. 2007, Moss and Wall 2007).

In Finland, new arrangements have tripled the number of male leave-takers (from 1 700 men in 2002 to 5 700 in 2005). But at the same time, the average length of the leave taken by fathers has fallen (from 64 working days in 2002 to 37 in 2003 and only 29 in 2005).

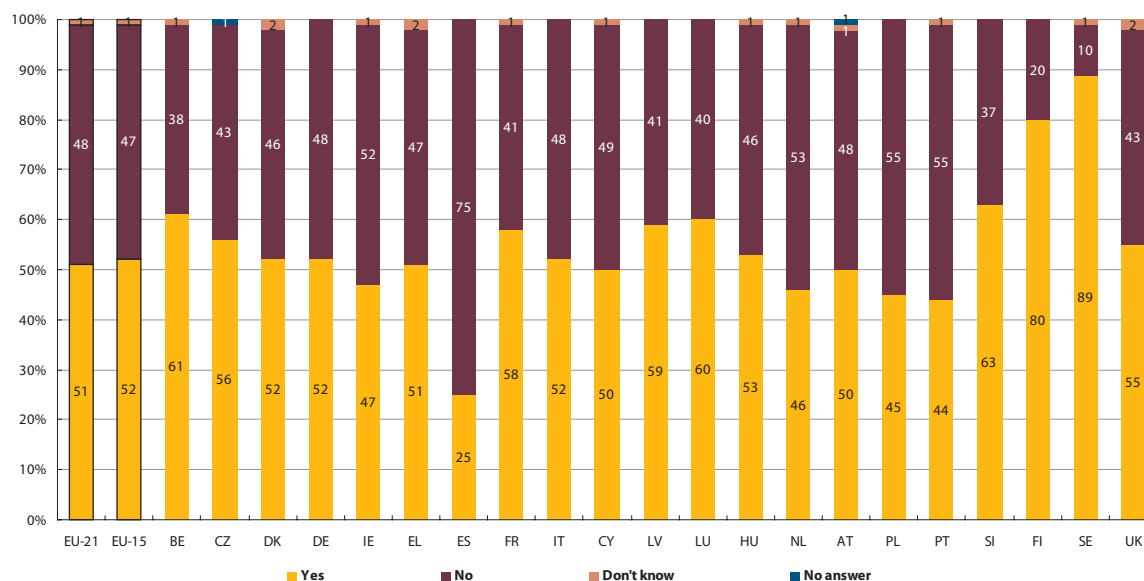
Take-up of parental leave is on average lower in the Netherlands, Ireland, and the UK than in the Nordic countries, even for mothers. Disincentives may be the absence of a legal framework for wage compensation and job protection as well as the discretionary power of employers in the organisation of parental leave. In the Netherlands, only 44% of entitled mothers actually made use of their right to parental leave in 2005 compared with 19% of entitled fathers. In the UK, parental leave is not used widely, at least in the first 17 months of a child's life; and if used, it is only taken for short periods. In 2005, 11% of mothers and 8% of fathers had taken some parental leave since the end of maternity leave. Two-thirds of mothers and three quarters of fathers had taken a week or less. In Ireland, a 2001 survey showed that of the 6.74

per cent of the work force eligible, 20 per cent used parental leave of which 84 per cent were women (De Henau et al. 2007, Moss and Wall 2007).

In 2002, fathers' share among leave beneficiaries accounted for 19% of the total in Luxembourg (De Henau et al. 2007). An equal share of male users takes leave on a part-time and on a full-time basis while 63% of women take a full-time leave. (De Henau et al. 2007). Men's preference for part-time leave is very pronounced in Belgium where more flexible part-time arrangements are available: 82% took leave for one-fifth of working time in 2004 (compared with 58% of women). Only 15% of all users opted for a full-time leave. In Luxembourg the slightly stronger implication of fathers might be explained by the quite generous level of wage replacement compared with Belgium or other countries.

From the above it becomes clear that the effect of the different types of father incentives is rather small. In fact, the most decisive feature seems to be the level of replacement income as it was also put forward by the Eurobarometer results presented earlier in this section. Besides an earnings-related payment, it appears more attractive to men to have leave that is granted as an individual right, that is not transferable between partners, and that offers parents considerable flexibility in terms of working time reduction.

Finally, it is interesting to take a look at the take-up of parental leave from the point of view of enterprises. The reasoning behind this question is that in certain types of establishments, the general attitude towards men taking parental leave may be more favourable than in other establishments, and might therefore influence the take-up of parental leave by fathers (see the example of Norway above). The Establishment Survey on Working Time and Working Life Balance (ESWT), carried out in 2003/2004 on the initiative of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, revealed that on average (21 European countries), 30% of the establishments with recent experience of parental leave reported that one or more male employees were among those who took parental leave. Nonetheless, the variation across the countries is large, ranging from values as low as 1% or 2% (Cyprus and the Czech Republic respectively) to 69% of the establishments in Sweden. In Slovenia, a percentage close to that of Sweden was reported (66%).

**Figure 5.8:** Establishments with male employees taking parental leave (%)

Note: Parental leave taken in the past three years.

Source: ESWT - Establishment Survey on Working Time and Working Life Balance 2003-2004.

### 5.3.5 Mothers' work resumption

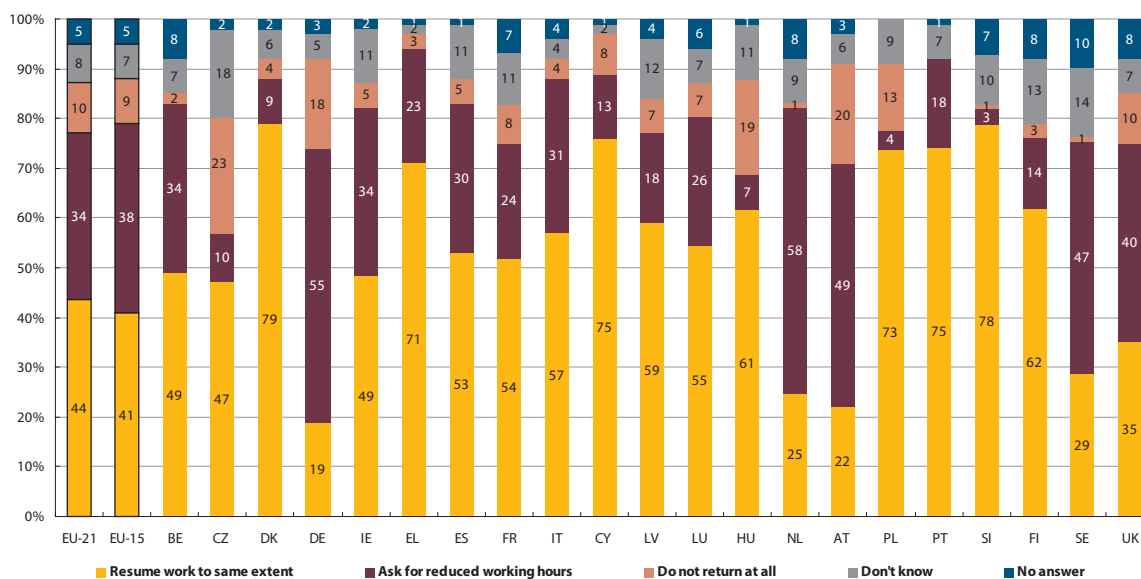
When parental leave compensation is flat-rate, it is expected to be more attractive to low-qualified women because of the lower wage level (compared with their partners) they can expect on the labour market. In France, the parental leave system has been shown to have had a negative effect on labour market participation of mothers of two children, especially those who are unskilled, for whom it is likely to be more difficult to resume work after parental leave has ended (Battagliola 1998, Afsa 1999, Piketty 2003).

Job protection obviously plays an important role. For example, in Spain, 11% of mothers having used parental leave and 25% of fathers do not return to the same company (Moss and Wall 2007).

In the Nordic countries, work resumption following leave seems much easier. Swedish women are backed up by a wide range of policy initiatives facilitating labour market participation. As a result, they tend not to withdraw completely from the labour market but rather to reduce their working time. The problem is that working part-time still

results in poor career prospects in terms of wage and responsibilities which reinforce the so-called glass ceiling effect (defined as a subtle and informal barrier that does not allow capable professionals to go beyond a certain level despite possessing sufficient skills to merit rising to the top of the hierarchy) (Albrecht et al. 2003, Périvier 2004).

In the earlier mentioned Establishment Survey on Working Time and Working Life Balance (ESWT) carried out in 2004/2005, 44% of the managers from establishments with employees on parental leave stated that the majority of their female employees resumed work afterwards, working the same number of hours as before. A further 34% of the enterprises stated that the majority of the mothers asked for reduced working hours (from full-time to part-time, or a further reduction when already working part-time). Only a relative minority (10%) reported that the majority of mothers did not resume work. But again, considerable differences exist between the countries in relation to a "typical behaviour", as illustrated in Figure 5.9.

**Figure 5.9: Women returning to work after parental leave (%)**

Notes: Action taken by the majority of the women, as reported by enterprises' management - Base: Establishments with female employees on parental leave in the past three years (management interviews).

Source: ESWT Establishment Survey on Working Time and Working Life Balance 2003-2004.

The most frequently observed type of behaviour is the resumption of work with the same number of hours as before, followed by the wish to reduce the number of hours worked. In 13 out of the 21 countries surveyed, (Belgium, Denmark, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg, Portugal, Slovenia, and Finland), the managers' answers conformed to this type of pattern. In Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and the UK, the most frequently observed type of behaviour is working at reduced hours, followed by resumption of work as prior to the parental leave. Especially Germany and Austria, countries that might be considered having a "conservative welfare regime", show a very pronounced concentration of answers in relation to the resumption of work at reduced hours.

Finally, in a third group of countries, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, resuming work to the same extent as prior to parental leave is also mentioned most often, but it is followed by a total exit of mothers from the company (and presumably often from the labour market as a whole). Working reduced hours is least common for these latter three countries, all central European new Member States. This fact might be linked to a historical legacy, where full-time employment was most common for both women and men and state-run childcare facilities were widely available.



## Working flexibilities







## Working flexibilities

This chapter focuses on working time arrangements offered to employed persons aged 25 to 49, designed to allow a better reconciliation of work and family life. It starts with a section outlining different forms of flexible work schemes, the reasons for working as such and finally their incidence on both employers and employees. It is followed by a section focusing on the average length of working time. Also, an overview of the prevalence of part-time work at Member State level and among the various sectors of the economy will be given. Finally, figures are shown on how the choice of working patterns of single- and couple-households is influenced by the presence of children.

Having children at home not only has an impact on the average length of working time, but may also influence the choice of a particular type of work. Indeed, in order to reconcile work and private life, some parents may seek work

that must be performed during atypical hours (evening, night, weekends). Consequently, a section devoted to the impact of children in the prevalence of non-standard working hours has also been included.

Working time arrangements can generally take different forms. The following sections will analyse more in detail three such types of working arrangement, namely the ability to start or leave work earlier or later, the ability to take whole days off without using holidays or special leaves, and teleworking.

Finally, a closer look will be taken at the involvement of employers in flexible working-time arrangements. Their contribution is presumably large but remains difficult to quantify at the level of the individual, as most flexible working time arrangements are settled at enterprise level.



## 6.1 Working time flexibility: pros and cons

In today's around-the-clock economies, flexibility of working time is not new and is a broad term. It usually refers to working patterns that deviate from the 9 to 5 rhythm on an average weekday. Traditional forms of extending the working week were once regulated (such as working overtime, in the evening, at night, on weekends and during holidays), but have been eased by regulatory intervention or collective agreements. Their incidence is further influenced by structural differences (and notably the relative importance of the services sector) and varies considerably between European countries.

Despite national discrepancies with regard to labour market institutions and performance, national policy choices tend to converge in two areas: the organisation of working time and the liberalisation of employment contracts. Considering the former, which is this section's main area of interest, government actions and/or collective agreements have primarily aimed to introduce flexibility into working time arrangements in order to better respond to business needs and employee demands. Businesses are mostly interested in adapting working hours to variations in workload, whilst employee demands are associated with the wish for an improved work-life balance.

A major factor in the definition of working time arrangements is the status of the jobholder as employee or self-employed. For employees, working time arrangements can generally take the following forms:

- Part-time work;
- Reduced hours, which allow people to trade income for time off;
- Term-time contracts, which allows employees to remain on a permanent contract as either full- or part-time employees, but gives them the right to unpaid leave during school holidays;
- Compressed working week, where weekly hours are compressed into fewer days than normal, for example a 4-day week, giving employees longer weekends;
- Flexitime, which allows employees to vary their working hours within specified limits (core hours) from day to day;
- Shift swapping, which allows employees to rearrange shifts among themselves to suit their needs; or self-rostering,

where employees schedule their own working day to meet the requirements of service delivery or production (often as a team with a mix of skills, accommodating individual preferences as much as possible);

- Staggered hours, where employees have different start, finish and break times (often in large workplaces to cover longer working days).

Such flexible working arrangements, when implemented effectively can provide tangible benefits to both employers and employees, in particular it can help to increase the labour market participation of women.

- From the employer's perspective, flexible working arrangements can help by facilitating the retention and attraction of staff, a factor which is of growing importance in an era of reduced labour supply and increasing demand by employees for arrangements to improve their work-private life balance. More innovative forms of flexible working arrangements can also increase productivity and reduce operating costs. Additionally, the provision of such arrangements can enhance an organisation's image as a 'good employer'.
- From the employee's perspective, flexible working arrangements are desirable, and in many cases essential, as a means of reconciling work and caring responsibilities. Their importance in this context is particularly significant in the light of other growing trends, including increasing commuting times and rising housing and childcare costs. It helps women to gain access to and remain in paid work, allowing them to obtain work experience and promotion possibilities similar to other workers. Furthermore, it allows men to have more time for family, including care-related activities. And finally, it promotes the general well-being of workers.

The Establishment Survey on Working-Time and Work-Life Balance (ESWT) analyses the incidence and specifications of various working-time arrangements at establishment level, the reasons for their implementation and their repercussions on the employees, especially on their work-private life balance.

### The Establishment Survey on Working-Time and Work-Life Balance (ESWT)

The Establishment Survey on Working-Time and Work-Life Balance (ESWT) covers 21 Member States (EU-15 in 2004 and six of the ten new Member States in 2005: the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia). It was conducted in over 21 thousand establishments with 10 or more employees (sampling 350 – 1500 establishments per country), covering both private and public establishments from virtually all sectors of economic activity, with the exception of 'agriculture', 'forestry', 'private households' and 'extraterritorial organisations'. Personnel managers and, where available, employee representatives were interviewed about working time arrangements and work-life balance in their workplaces.

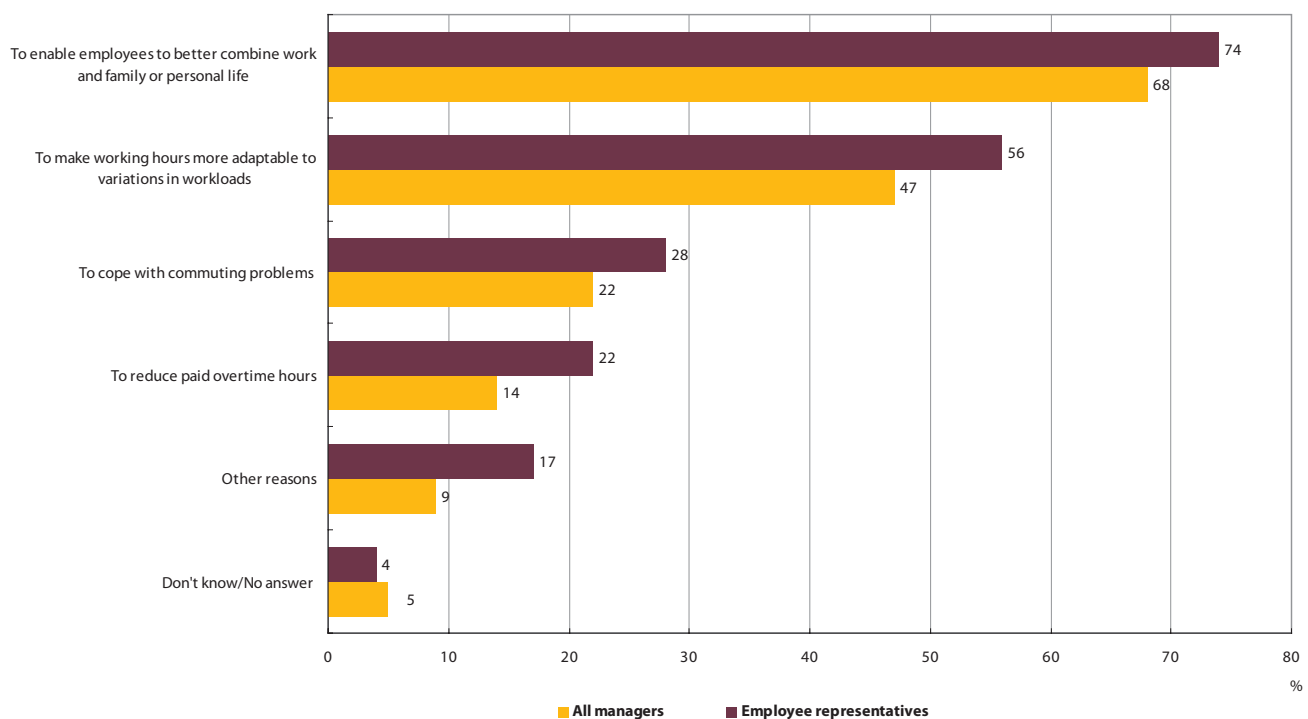
For more details see: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/worklifebalance/eswt.htm>.

In the framework of the ESWT, both managers and employee representatives were asked the reasons for the introduction of flexible working-time arrangements. Remarkably, the rankings of the reasons largely coincide (see Figure 6.1). The

first reason evoked by both personnel managers and employee representatives is to enable employees to better combine work and family life. The second reason is to better adapt working hours to the variations in the workload.

**Figure 6.1:** Reasons for introducing flexible working times (%)

*Surveyed companies with employee representation, offering flexible working time arrangements (multiple answers possible)*



Note: The structure of establishments with employee representation differs significantly from the structure of all the establishments surveyed.

Source: ESWT, 2004–2005

Introducing such opportunities gives a positive image of the company, both externally and internally. Indeed, enterprises operating flexible working hours reported a reduction in tardiness and absenteeism and consequently an increase in productivity, an improvement in the retention of skilled women at work after childbirth, the possibility of recruiting people who could not work within standard working hours and increased employee motivation.

Nevertheless, flexible working time arrangements can also have drawbacks for employers, such as:

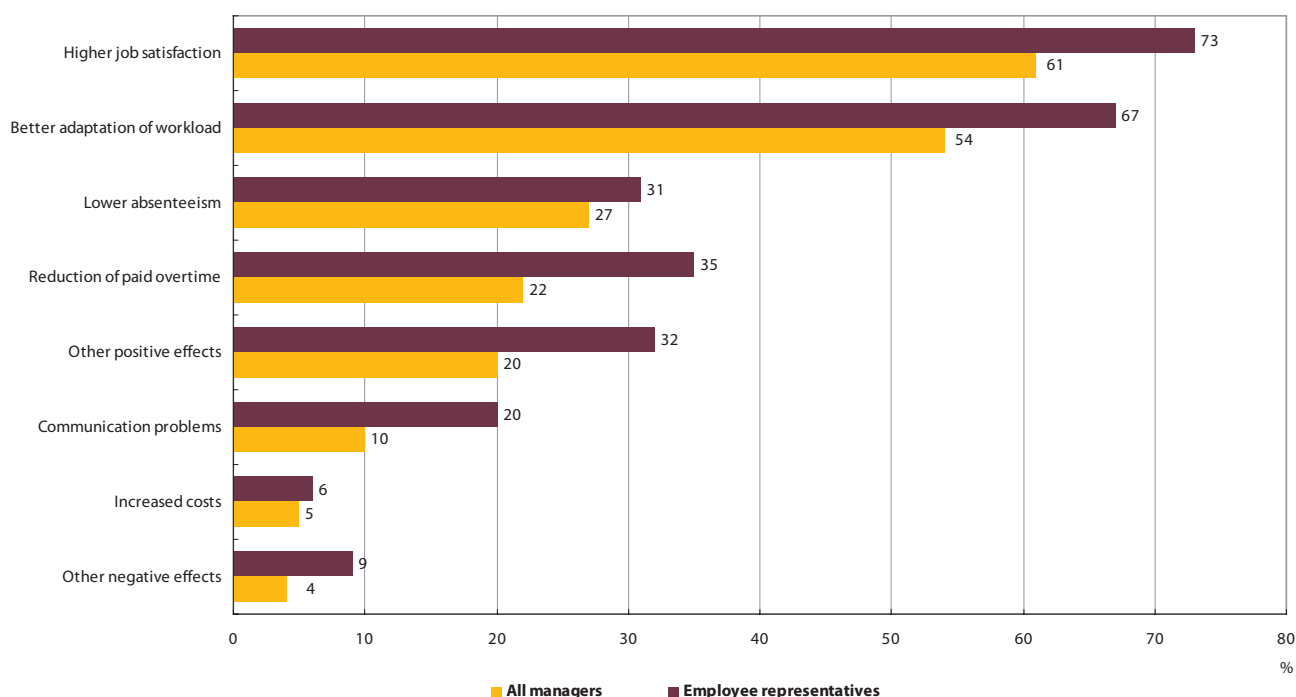
- loss of direct supervision over working hours with some types of measures (e.g. flexitime, time banking);
- the increase in working hour flexibility might be

- accompanied by a greater complexity in scheduling work;
- increased organisational expenditures may occur in some cases (e.g. job-sharing);
- communication problems.

As regards the perceived effects of introducing flexible working-time arrangements (see Figure 6.2), both managers and employee representatives most frequently reported higher job satisfaction following the introduction of flexible working time, followed by a better adaptation of working hours to the workload. In both groups only a minority of respondents reported negative effects.

**Figure 6.2:** Effects of introducing flexible working time (%)

*Surveyed companies with employee representation, offering flexible working time arrangements (multiple answers possible)*



*Note:* The structure of establishments with employee representation differs significantly from the structure of all the establishments surveyed.

*Source:* ESWT, 2004–2005

## 6.2 Working hours

### 6.2.1 Average length of working time

Before broaching the subject of flexible working arrangements, the following paragraphs give an overview on the average length of working time with an emphasis on part-time work, which is considered to be a type of flexibility. Finally, an analysis of children's impact on the length of working time will also be presented.

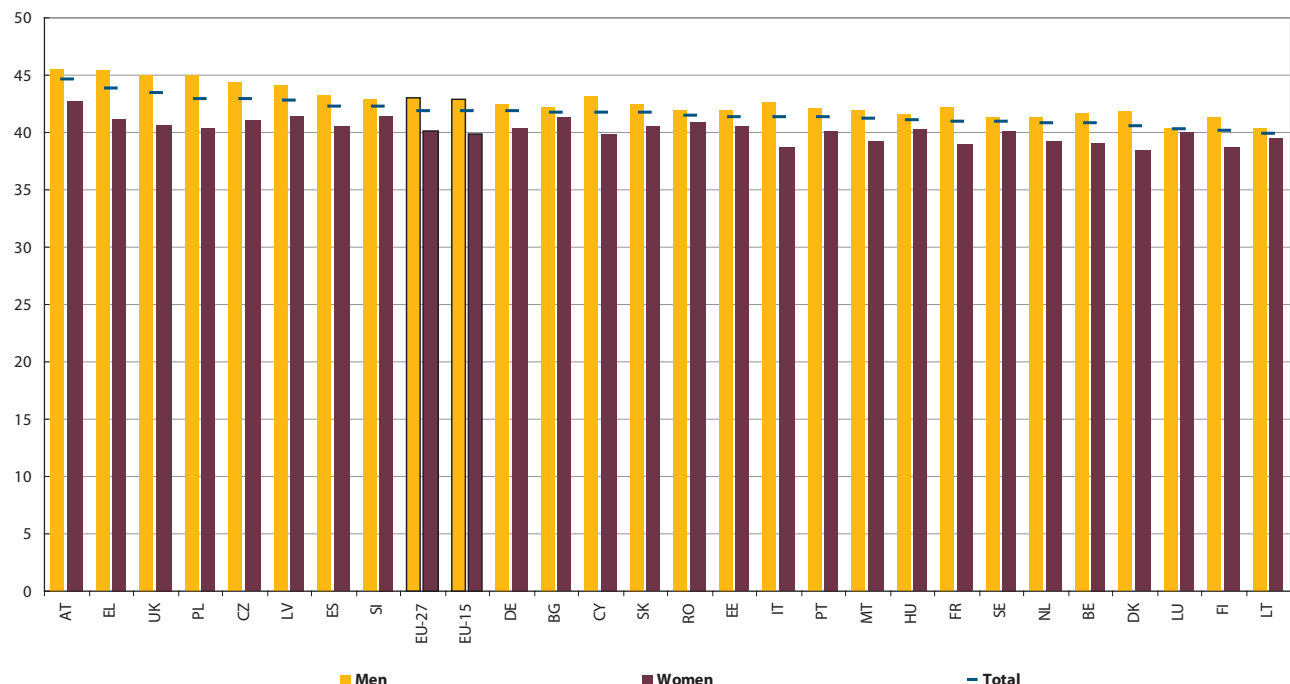
The European Labour Force Survey reveals that the average working week in a full-time job in 2006, irrespective of gender, lasted 41.9 hours at EU-27 level (see Figure 6.3). The longest average was registered in Austria (44.6 hours) and shortest in Lithuania (39.9 hours). The disparity between Member States was not very large. For men, the average working week at EU-27 level lasted 43.0 hours (ranging from 45.6 hours in Austria to 40.4 hours in Luxembourg and Lithuania), while that of women was 40.1 hours (ranging from 42.7 hours in Austria to 38.4 hours in Denmark). The gender

gap was considerable in Poland, the United Kingdom and Greece (more than 4 hours' difference), whereas it was only marginal in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Luxembourg (less than 1 hour).

The average duration of part-time work at EU-27 level amounted to 21.3 hours a week. The gender gap was quite narrow at EU-level, with men working on average 21.9 hours a week, against 21.2 hours for women. Irrespective of gender, the weekly duration of part-time work was the longest in Romania and Sweden and the shortest in Spain and Germany. The gender gap in the number of working hours of employees working part-time was particularly high in the Netherlands and Romania, where men working part-time tended to work 4 to 5 hours longer than their female counterparts, and in Sweden and Denmark where the opposite was true.

**Figure 6.3.a:** Average weekly number of hours usually worked in full-time employment, by gender, 2006

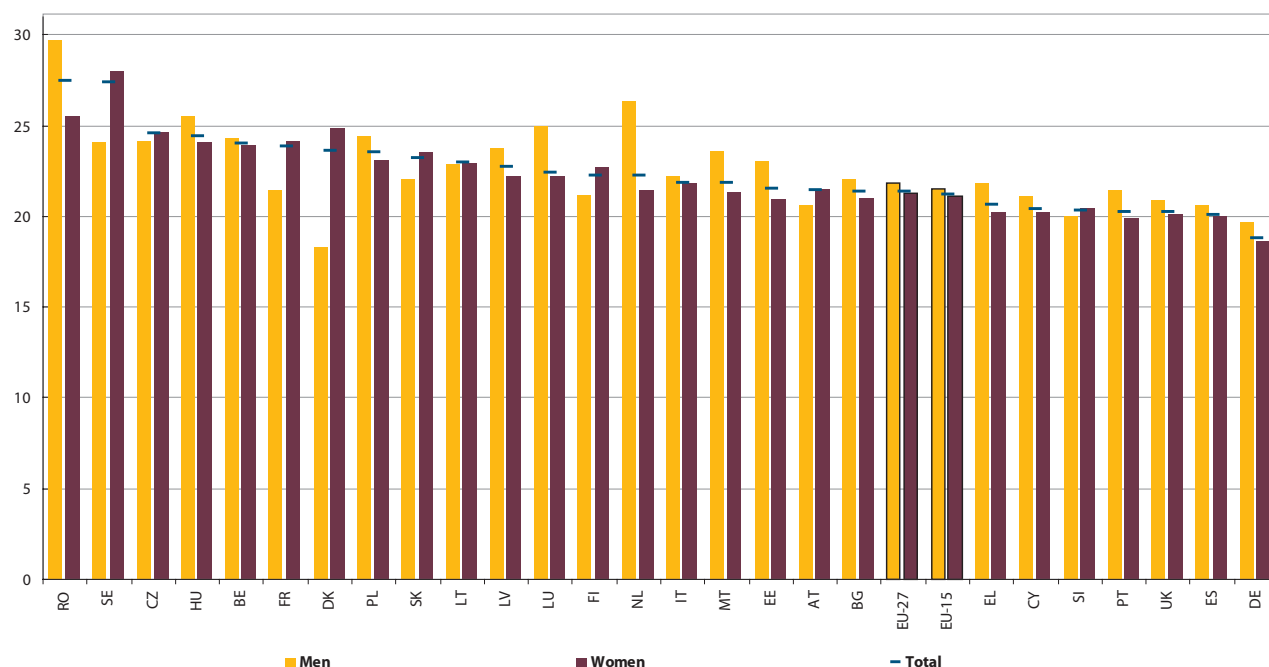
*Hours worked in the main job, for the age group 25-49*



Note: IE not available.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

**Figure 6.3.b:** Average weekly number of hours usually worked in part-time employment, by gender, 2006  
Hours worked in the main job, for the age group 25-49



Note: IE not available.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

## 6.2.2 Prevalence of part-time work

As outlined in Chapter 2, there has been an increase in the availability of part-time employment in recent years, a development essentially driven by an increasing number of women on the labour market and the possibility for a more flexible organisation of work.

While the propensity to be employed part-time differs from one Member State to another, it clearly appears that this situation concerns mostly women. Considering employees aged 25–49 in part-time work as a share of all employees of the same age, three groups of countries can be identified<sup>(1)</sup>:

- Member States where less than 10% of the total number of employees have a part-time job: Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Lithuania, Hungary, Malta, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Spain, Cyprus and Latvia;
- Member States with between 10% and 20% of part-time workers: France, Italy, Luxembourg, Denmark, Sweden and the United Kingdom;
- Member States where more than 20% of all employees work part-time: Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria.

Certain branches of the economy are more prone to offer part-time employment than others. Table 6.1 presents for each country the five sectors of the economy (excluding private households) accounting for the highest shares of part-time employment. The information does however not reveal the relative importance of each sector in the country concerned.

One could expect the services sector to predominate due not only to its increasing importance in the national economies, but also due to the relative facility with which this option can be granted. Indeed, 'blue collar' occupations tend to offer less flexible working schedules due to specific requirements in the work organisation. This is largely confirmed as 'Health and social work', 'Other community, social and personal service', 'Education' appear most often in the Top-5 sectors offering part-time job opportunities.

In many new Member States, part-time employment in agriculture is most common, whereas this sector only accounted for minor shares in old Member States, where it is dominated by 'self-employment'.

<sup>(1)</sup> Part-time work refers to the main job and is based on self declaration, i.e. according to the spontaneous answer given by the respondents. See also Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2.

**Table 6.1:** Sectors where part-time jobs are most common, 2006*Part-time jobs as a proportion of total jobs, age group 25–49.*

	first	second	third	fourth	fifth
<b>BE</b>	Health and social work 35.7%	Education 34.3%	Financial intermediation 30.4%	Public administration 29.9%	Real estate, renting and business activities 29.8%
<b>BG</b>	Other community, social and personal service 16.7%	Wholesale and retail trade 13.7%	Education 13.1%	Public administration 8.9%	Agriculture 8.5%
<b>CZ</b>	Education 24.0%	Manufacturing 23.9%	Wholesale and retail trade 23.3%	Real estate, renting and business activities 21.4%	Other community, social and personal service 21.3%
<b>DK</b>	Health and social work 35.6%	Hotels and restaurants 29.2%	Other community, social and personal service 23.1%	Education 19.3%	Real estate, renting and business activities 15.7%
<b>DE</b>	Health and social work 32.0%	Education 28.9%	Other community, social and personal service 28.6%	Transport, storage and communication 28.0%	Public administration 27.9%
<b>EE</b>	Education 18.9%	Fishing 14.4%	Other community, social and personal service 13.9%	Health and social work 12.7%	Real estate, renting and business activities 12.3%
<b>EL</b>	Education 20.9%	Agriculture 20.3%	Wholesale and retail trade 19.7%	Other community, social and personal service 17.2%	Hotels and restaurants 16.6%
<b>ES</b>	Real estate, renting and business activities 25.6%	Wholesale and retail trade 24.1%	Health and social work 23.7%	Education 22.6%	Other community, social and personal service 20.8%
<b>FR</b>	Health and social work 32.5%	Education 27.6%	Other community, social and personal service 27.4%	Public administration 26.9%	Hotels and restaurants 26.4%
<b>IT</b>	Other community, social and personal service 31.3%	Public administration 31.0%	Health and social work 30.8%	Real estate, renting and business activities 30.4%	Hotels and restaurants 28.7%
<b>CY</b>	Real estate, renting and business activities 18.1%	Other community, social and personal service 17.0%	Wholesale and retail trade 16.9%	Education 16.6%	Fishing 16.1%
<b>LV</b>	Agriculture 19.6%	Wholesale and retail trade 13.0%	Other community, social and personal service 12.3%	Health and social work 9.8%	Manufacturing 9.6%
<b>LT</b>	Agriculture 29.9%	Education 24.2%	Wholesale and retail trade 17.6%	Transport, storage and communication 15.4%	Health and social work 13.3%
<b>LU</b>	Health and social work 31.1%	Other community, social and personal service 28.2%	Real estate, renting and business activities 27.8%	Financial intermediation 26.6%	Education 25.1%
<b>HU</b>	Public administration 25.4%	Hotels and restaurants 22.7%	Other community, social and personal service 20.7%	Wholesale and retail trade 20.4%	Manufacturing 19.8%
<b>MT</b>	Health and social work 22.1%	Manufacturing 21.1%	Education 20.1%	Wholesale and retail trade 19.7%	Hotels and restaurants 19.2%
<b>NL</b>	Health and social work 42.7%	Financial intermediation 40.4%	Education 38.2%	Public administration 37.7%	Manufacturing 34.8%
<b>AT</b>	Health and social work 30.6%	Real estate, renting and business activities 29.6%	Wholesale and retail trade 29.2%	Construction 28.6%	Education 26.8%
<b>PL</b>	Agriculture 24.7%	Real estate, renting and business activities 23.4%	Education 22.9%	Wholesale and retail trade 22.7%	Other community, social and personal service 22.2%
<b>PT</b>	Agriculture 21.8%	Real estate, renting and business activities 20.1%	Wholesale and retail trade 18.3%	Education 17.7%	Manufacturing 17.0%
<b>RO</b>	Agriculture 29.1%	Wholesale and retail trade 20.1%	Real estate, renting and business activities 16.0%	Construction 13.7%	Education 13.5%
<b>SI</b>	Hotels and restaurants 16.4%	Wholesale and retail trade 15.7%	Education 15.1%	Other community, social and personal service 15.1%	Agriculture 14.4%
<b>SK</b>	Education 19.4%	Health and social work 12.3%	Wholesale and retail trade 12.0%	Other community, social and personal service 11.6%	Public administration 10.3%
<b>FI</b>	Health and social work 23.0%	Wholesale and retail trade 21.9%	Hotels and restaurants 21.5%	Education 20.9%	Other community social and personal service 20.0%
<b>SE</b>	Health and social work 44.6%	Education 30.6%	Other community, social and personal service 26.8%	Hotels and restaurants 21.8%	Wholesale and retail trade 19.8%
<b>UK</b>	Health and social work 30.5%	Wholesale and retail trade 29.3%	Transport, storage and communication 29.0%	Hotels and restaurants 28.8%	Education 28.2%

Notes: IE, data not available.

Analysis based on the level 1 of the classification NACE Rev 1.1.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.





### 6.2.3 Children's impact on the length of working time

Differences in working times between men and women are not surprising, since women continue to be responsible for the larger part of domestic and family work and, for this reason, tend to devote less time to paid work than men. It appears that men with children choose to work more while women often reduce their working time or vary the number of hours worked per week, in order to be more available for caring responsibilities. Also, men are often pushed to work more as the presence of children will raise the cost of living of a household and the partner is no longer (or less) available to generate a (full) second income.

The following tables provide information on the average number of usual weekly working hours according to the presence of children, and this according to the type of household: singles (one adult: man or woman) and couples (two adults married or not, living in the same household)<sup>(2)</sup>.

Single-parent households are likely to be those suffering the most from the imbalance between work and family life. One could therefore expect that compared to couples, the presence of children would have a greater negative impact on the number of weekly working hours. Furthermore, the majority of single parents are women.

At first sight, the data do not entirely confirm this statement (see Table 6.2). At European level (EU-27), single parents in full-time employment worked just under two hours less a week than singles without children; however, when employed part-time, single mothers and fathers worked on average half an hour more per week than their childless counterparts. No uniform pattern was identified at Member State level, but the figures tend to demonstrate that the presence of children generally has a deeper impact on single parents working part-time. In fact, in Spain, France, Hungary, Austria and Romania, singles with children worked two to three hours longer per week than singles without children, whereas they worked two to three hours less in Estonia, the Netherlands and Malta.

When focusing on couples (see Table 6.3), the EU-27 aggregate shows hardly any impact on the average weekly working time: indeed, differences brought about by the presence of children in the various employment patterns (both partners employed, only one partner employed, one partner employed full-time and the other part-time) are only

**Table 6.2:** Average number of hours usually worked per week in single-person and single-parent households, 2006

*Hours worked in the main job, age group 25–49.*

	Single without children		Single with children	
	Employed full-time	Employed part-time	Employed full-time	Employed part-time
<b>EU-27</b>	41.3	20.8	39.5	21.3
<b>EU-15</b>	41.3	20.9	39.3	21.2
<b>BE</b>	35.9	21.6	35.2	21.4
<b>BG</b>	41.4	13.9	41.0	15.1
<b>CZ</b>	43.5	24.3	41.5	24.9
<b>DE</b>	41.8	19.6	40.4	20.8
<b>EE</b>	40.4	23.0	41.4	20.0
<b>EL</b>	42.9	20.4	40.6	18.8
<b>ES</b>	40.8	19.0	40.3	21.2
<b>FR</b>	40.3	22.1	38.9	24.7
<b>IT</b>	40.5	20.8	38.2	22.5
<b>CY</b>	40.7	20.3	39.7	18.7
<b>LV</b>	40.8	19.6	42.2	20.8
<b>LT</b>	35.1	18.1	34.9	18.4
<b>LU</b>	38.6	23.0	39.0	24.6
<b>HU</b>	36.8	20.4	37.8	23.1
<b>MT</b>	40.3	20.9	39.9	18.8
<b>NL</b>	39.9	25.7	39.5	23.6
<b>AT</b>	43.7	20.6	42.1	23.1
<b>PL</b>	42.3	22.7	40.4	23.5
<b>PT</b>	41.0	18.9	39.6	20.4
<b>RO</b>	38.3	6.9	38.8	9.5
<b>SI</b>	43.6	18.4	41.1	18.9
<b>SK</b>	41.2	23.2	40.8	24.7
<b>FI</b>	39.6	20.9	38.3	22.6
<b>UK</b>	43.3	20.3	39.4	19.5

Notes: The analysis is based on a specific LFS database allowing household composition breakdowns. This database does not contain information on DK and SE. – No data available for IE.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

very slight, the averages being lower when having children by less than half an hour. As for single parents, a different pattern is revealed at Member State level, although no prevalent trend clearly stood out. At first sight it seems that the employment pattern 'one adult working full-time and one working part-time' is most affected by the presence of children.

<sup>(2)</sup> It should be noted that the number of hours usually worked for couples and other households should be considered as an average between both adults in the same household. Footnote should be repeated in the respective tables.

When both partners in a couple are employed full-time, the impact of children on the average working week never exceeded one hour (average weekly working time of every adult person present in the household). Notable exceptions included Italy, where the presence of children resulted in parents working 1.2 hours less, and the Netherlands, where child-rearing led to parents working 2.5 hours more a week than couples without children.

In households where one partner is employed full-time and the other is not employed, sizeable discrepancies were registered in Slovenia and Romania, where the average working time decreases by 2 hours in the presence of children. In Hungary couples with children worked on average 3 hours less, and in Estonia a difference of 4 hours was registered.

**Table 6.3:** Impact of children on the number of hours usually worked per week, in couples' households, 2006  
*Hours per person worked in the main job, age group 25-49*

	Couple without children			Couple with children		
	Both employed full-time	One employed, one not employed	One full-time, one part-time	Both employed full-time	One employed, one not employed	One full-time, one part-time
<b>EU-27</b>	41.7	20.9	31.5	41.4	20.5	31.4
<b>EU-15</b>	41.7	20.7	31.5	41.2	20.3	31.3
<b>BE</b>	40.7	18.9	31.5	40.9	18.4	32.7
<b>BG</b>	41.5	21.2	33.1	41.7	20.2	35.1
<b>CZ</b>	42.8	23.8	32.1	42.7	22.7	34.9
<b>DE</b>	41.5	20.0	30.4	41.6	19.6	29.3
<b>EE</b>	40.9	26.2	29.6	41.2	22.1	32.2
<b>EL</b>	43.0	21.4	30.5	42.4	22.3	33.1
<b>ES</b>	42.1	21.1	31.3	41.4	20.6	31.6
<b>FR</b>	40.5	21.5	31.8	41.0	20.5	33.6
<b>IT</b>	41.1	20.4	31.7	39.9	20.1	32.0
<b>CY</b>	40.3	21.9	28.7	41.1	21.5	33.9
<b>LV</b>	42.3	19.5	30.8	42.6	20.7	33.3
<b>LT</b>	40.5	19.1	33.9	39.8	18.4	29.9
<b>LU</b>	40.2	20.1	32.9	40.5	20.2	31.3
<b>HU</b>	41.0	22.6	34.2	40.9	19.7	31.9
<b>MT</b>	39.8	20.2	31.7	40.3	20.4	31.2
<b>NL</b>	40.1	20.2	32.2	42.6	19.3	29.4
<b>AT</b>	43.9	22.8	32.7	44.4	21.6	32.7
<b>PL</b>	41.5	22.9	35.1	42.2	22.5	34.0
<b>PT</b>	41.0	21.1	31.0	41.1	20.8	31.4
<b>RO</b>	41.3	21.3	35.7	41.4	19.3	36.3
<b>SI</b>	41.3	24.1	30.5	42.1	22.2	31.7
<b>SK</b>	42.1	20.8	30.8	41.4	21.6	33.2
<b>FI</b>	39.9	14.5	28.8	40.2	13.0	30.6
<b>UK</b>	43.2	21.3	32.5	42.2	21.4	32.4

Notes: The analysis is based on a specific LFS database allowing household composition breakdowns. This database does not contain information on DK and SE. - No data available for IE.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

As suggested above, children seem to have a significant impact on the average working time of couples where one partner is employed full-time and the other part-time. This can be noted when looking at the figures at country level; the EU data not differing significantly due to the compensation effects of Member States' values (countries with a higher number of hours are 'levelled out' by countries with lower number of hours) when proceeding to the EU-27 aggregation. In a majority of Member States, the presence of children results in longer weekly working hours, especially in Cyprus, Latvia and Slovakia. Conversely, in the presence of children

working time diminished in Germany, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland and especially Lithuania. In Austria and the United Kingdom, childrearing does not noticeably affect the average number of hours worked in a week.

Not only does the presence of children have an impact on the average amount of time parents spend at work, but it might also influence their choice of a particular type of work. Indeed, some parents may be required to work during atypical hours, a topic further detailed in the following section.

## 6.3 Non-standard working hours, atypical work

### Preliminary remarks

A growing number of persons work during what has traditionally been regarded as 'family time'. Most often, working at such times cannot be considered as a type of 'flexibility'. Indeed, a person's control over working arrangements depends largely on the labour market and the bargaining position. Workers in white-collar jobs are more likely to report working arrangements which suit their career aspirations and/or family needs, whereas blue-collar workers are more likely to feel that there is no option but to work at atypical times, as there is no scope for negotiating in their workplace or finding a job with more suitable hours.

For some, working at atypical times—during evenings or nights, at weekends—can have some benefits; for example, it enables parents to spend more time with their children or have more time for themselves. It often reduces or eliminates the need for non-parental childcare, including the related practical difficulties and costs that can result from this. Conversely, some parents working atypical hours will not be able to participate as much as they would like in family activities and their children's lives. This applies especially to those where financial constraints and/or limited access to affordable childcare mean that 'shift parenting' is seen as the only viable option.

Conversely, working atypical hours often reduces opportunities to partake in collective activities, be it sports

and culture or political and other social activities. This particularly concerns people working at night, who cannot take part in such activities on a regular basis. Many complain about a lack of friends and feel shut out of society. Night workers often request to revert to a day job, even if this means earning less money. Few night workers imagine the social, family or medical consequences of night work before actually experiencing them<sup>(3)</sup>.

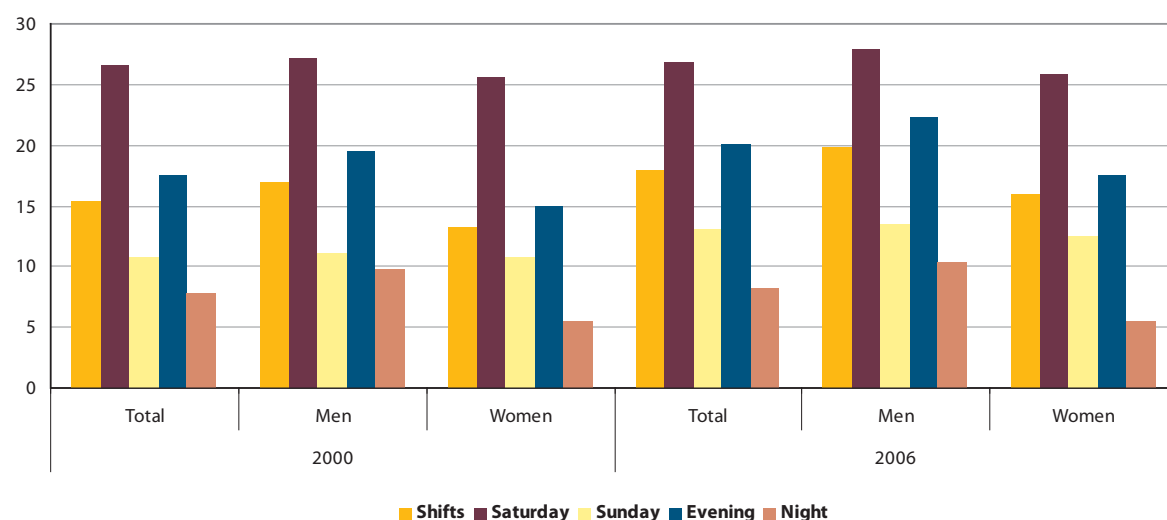
Figure 6.4 displays the prevalence of atypical work in Europe. The different categories of atypical work should be considered separately. Double counting can indeed occur as a person may work during the evening and at night or Saturday and Sunday. Working Saturdays is most common form of atypical work in Europe, accounting for as much as 27% of the surveyed population in 2006. With shares of around 8%, night work is far less frequent, and is often considered as the most unpopular of atypical working hours.

A tangible discrepancy was registered when comparing atypical work shares in 2000 and 2006: Sunday work increased from 10.8% (total) in 2000 to 13.1% in 2006. A similar evolution was noted for evening and shift work, whereas changes in Saturday and night work were only marginal. Men are usually more likely to work atypical hours than their counterparts, but the differences are substantial only with regard to evening and night work.

<sup>(3)</sup> La Valle, I et al.(2002), Happy families? Atypical work and its influence on family life – Joseph Rowntree Foundation – [www.jrf.org.uk](http://www.jrf.org.uk)

**Figure 6.4:** Atypical work in Europe, 2006 compared to 2000

*As a percentage of the total employment in the age group 25-49, by gender (categories to be considered separately)*



Source: Eurostat, LFS.

### 6.3.1 Shift work

Working shifts means having a regular work schedule during which an enterprise is operational or provides services beyond normal opening hours. Shift work involves different groups or crews of workers succeeding each other at the same work site to perform the same operations. It usually involves work early in the morning, at night or on weekends. The weekly rest days do not always coincide with normal rest days.

Many shift workers complain about not having enough time to spend with their husbands or wives. Studies have shown that shift work reduces the amount of time spent with the family and notably increases the risk of divorce; night work may also increase irritability<sup>(4)</sup>.

These workers often cannot adapt their working hours to their needs. On the other hand, as mentioned above, shift work can have the positive effect of reducing non-parental childcare.

The share of shift work in a country is influenced by the structure of its economy. Shift work is especially widespread in the manufacturing industry, driven by the need for efficiency in the use of machinery and equipment.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that there is also a 'mild' form of shift work that does not necessarily disrupt family life. This is for instance the case when work starts earlier in the morning or shifts end somewhat later in the evening, without however completely disrupting the parental function or encroaching on usual sleeping times.

Without going into the details of the fabric of national economies, fairly high proportions of shift work among 25–

49-year-olds were registered in central European Member States, especially in Slovenia, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia (see Figure 6.5). This is likely to be linked to the relatively high share of employment in the manufacturing industry in these countries.

The highest shares of male shift workers with children were found in Hungary, where 37.1% of all male employees aged 24–49 work in shifts. This was followed by Romanian and Latvian men, with shares of 36.0% and 34.8% respectively. All other countries registered shares of under a third, with proportions as low as 12.4% in Cyprus and 3.6% in Denmark.

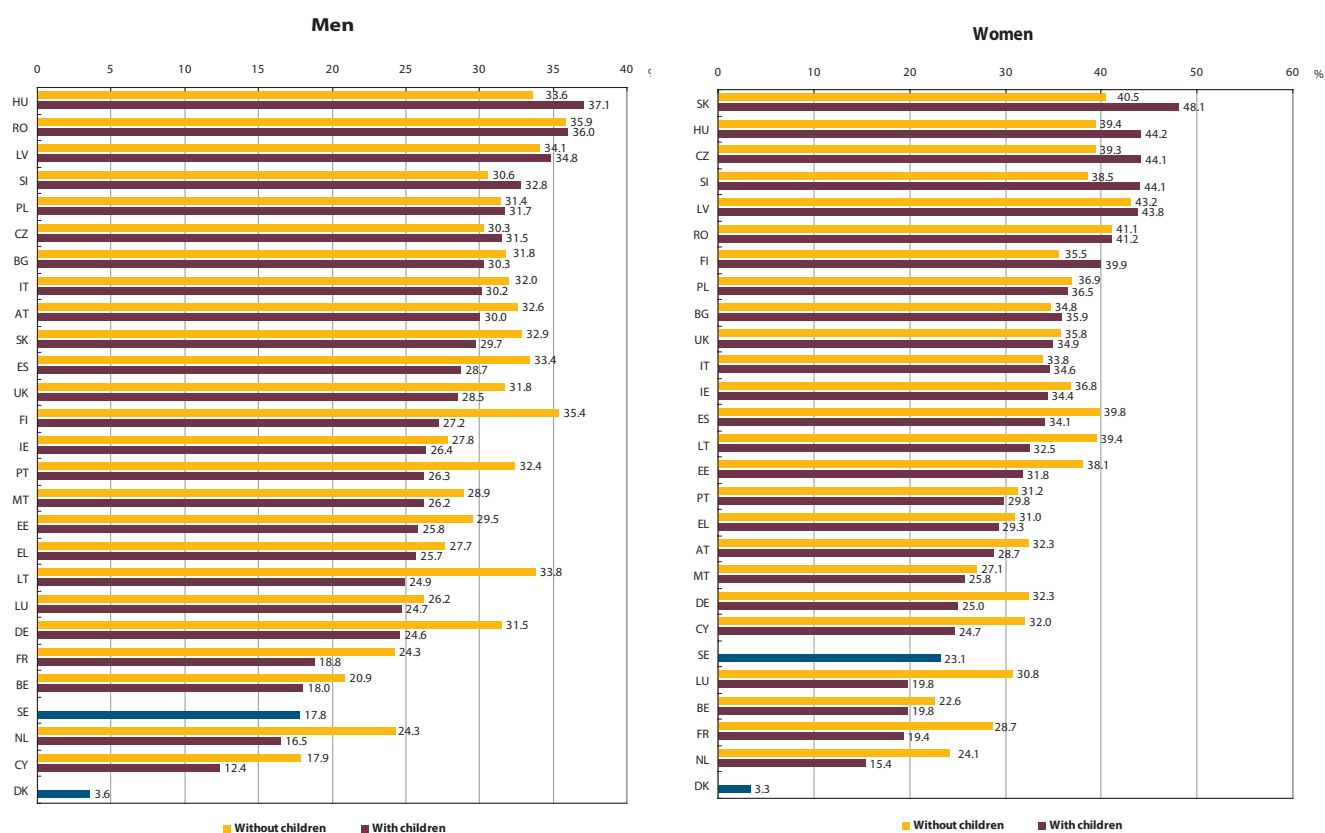
Expectedly, men with children tend to participate less in shift work. Indeed, working shifts makes it hard to plan family responsibilities, spend time with children and attend school meetings. The proportion of male shift workers with children was actually higher only in Hungary, Latvia, Slovenia, Poland and the Czech Republic.

In relative terms, shift work is even more widespread among women. Nearly half (48.1%) of all Slovakian female employees with children and aged between 25 and 49 were working in shifts in 2006, considerably more than their childless counterparts (40.5%). Similar situations can be observed in Hungary, the Czech Republic, Slovenia, and, to a lesser degree, Finland. In most other countries, the proportion of shift-working women with children was lower. Large discrepancies were noted in Lithuania, Germany, Cyprus, Luxembourg, France and the Netherlands.

<sup>(4)</sup> Van Reeth, O. (1998) : Sleep and Circadian Disturbances in Shift Work : Strategies for their Management – *Horm Res* 1998 ; 49 :158-162

**Figure 6.5: Shift workers with and without children, 2006**

*As a percentage of total employees with and without children in the age group 25-49, by gender*



Notes: DK and SE are taken from the standard LFS data. The latter does not allow differentiating shift workers with and without children.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.

### 6.3.2 Evening and night work

As definitions for evening and night work vary considerably, establishing a strictly common basis for all Member States is not an easy task. While cross-country differences in standard (core) working hours and evening or night work may partly reflect cultural and climatic differences, the statistics in this section are based on survey questions in the EU Labour Force Survey, so as to achieve the largest possible common denominator.

In general, 'evening work' can be considered to be work done after the usual hours of working time in the respective country, but before usual sleeping hours, while 'night work' is work performed during usual sleeping hours. 'Usually' here means on at least half of the days worked in the case of night and evening work in a reference period of four weeks preceding the interview and refers to formal working arrangements.

Figure 6.6 presents the proportion of employees usually working during evenings and at night, with and without

children. Among male employees with children, there are proportionally more evening and night workers than among male employee without children. Conversely, proportionally more female employees work such hours when they have no children.

Expectedly, night and evening work is far less frequent than shift work. Night work cuts across biological (circadian) rhythms and puts work times at loggerheads with social and family life. This gap has a substantial impact on workers' health.

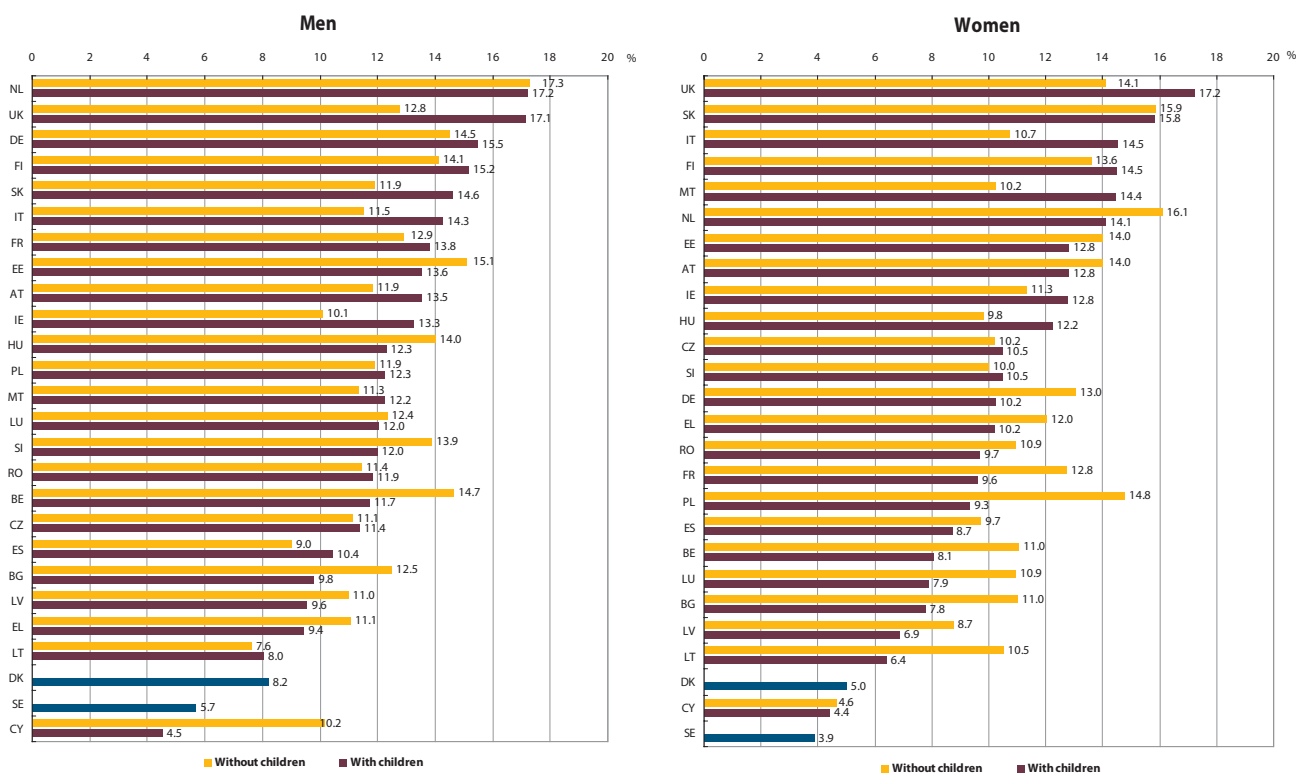
Night workers generally experience sleep problems. Working during the night does not mean that an extended sleep period will follow the next morning. When night workers get home, the daylight sends their organism a signal and reinforces the natural urge to stay awake. Workers also have to cope with all the problems caused by what the rest of society is doing: traffic, children playing, the phone ringing, and so on.

## ILO's Convention on night work by women

The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Convention 89 (revised) on night work by women, adopted in 1948, in principle provides for a ban on night work by women in industry. However, in a ruling issued on 25 July 1991, the Court of Justice of the European Union declared this Convention to be incompatible with the principle of equality of the sexes proclaimed by Community Directive 76/207 (which has force of law in all the countries of the European Union). The Court considered that a form of discrimination was involved, an impediment to equality of opportunity between men and women as regards access to the labour market. Following this ruling, the seven EU Member States that had not yet withdrawn from Convention 89 did so in a hurry, followed by other countries. The International Labour Conference, acting on a call to revise Convention 89, adopted in 1990 both a protocol to Convention 89, with a view to facilitating its ratification, and a new Convention on night work, No. 171, which no longer bans women from night work in industry, but regulates such work for men and women alike. This Convention came into force in 1995, but has not yet been ratified by all Member States.

**Figure 6.6:** Employees with and without children working during evenings and at night, 2006

*As a percentage of total employees with and without children in the age group 25–49, by gender*



Notes: PT is missing. Data for DK and SE are taken from the standard LFS data. The latter makes no distinction between workers with and without children.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.





### 6.3.3 Weekend work

In all European economies, shop opening hours and operating times of equipment have been extended into the weekend. Some employers contend that weekend work in services could enhance economic benefits, whereas some governments expect this will create more employment. Others maintain that weekend work would be prejudicial to workers' social lives and would be particularly detrimental to family life.

Parents are especially likely to miss out on quality time with their children at weekends, when they are not at school and would traditionally enjoy a trip to the park, a family game, a special outing or simply time at home together.

However, weekend work is now widespread and can no longer be avoided in many economic sectors. The potential advantages of weekend work from the point of view of employers include the continuous use of facilities and equipment, particularly in capital-intensive industries; the increased responsiveness to customers' delivery times and needs as well as an improved match between shop opening hours and fluctuations in customer demands.

From the point of view of employees, weekend work can enable some workers to combine work during the week and other private interests and obligations (e.g. family, further training); it can also enable workers to generate higher earnings if premium payments are provided for weekend work, in particular for low-skilled and blue-collar workers.

Conversely, the potential disadvantages of weekend work for employers include higher operating costs, particularly personnel costs; inconvenient social times (called 'unsocial' hours) and particularly work on the weekly rest day that are often coupled with extra payments and premiums.

Employees may perceive negatively the fact that working hours occur at inconvenient times, which may cause conflicts with social obligations and create problems for workers with family responsibilities, especially for those workers with children and other family-care obligations.

One possibility offered by weekend work is that it allows families to do 'shift parenting', which means one parent can be with the children while the other is working. This avoids the need to pay for childcare, which many parents cannot afford, cannot find or do not feel happy about using.

Weekend work may be compensated with extra or 'premium' payments in addition to the normal wage. This is the case in many industrialised countries, where shop opening hours and

operating time of equipment have been extended into the weekend. The extension of shop opening hours during the weekend has been a controversial issue in many countries. Some employers contend that weekend work in services could enhance economic benefits, whereas some governments anticipate this will create more employment. Others maintain that weekend work would be prejudicial to workers' social lives and would be particularly detrimental to family life. Depending on the country, weekend work may be introduced via a collective agreement (e.g. Belgium, Denmark, France, Norway), only after approval by the works council, a firm-level labour-management committee (e.g. Germany), or simply by an employer's decision (e.g. United States).

ILO Weekly Rest Conventions No. 14 (1921) and No. 106 (1957) provide that each worker should have at least 24 hours of uninterrupted rest every seven days. Whenever possible, the rest day(s) should be simultaneous for all employees of an undertaking and correspond with the traditions and customs of the country. In the European Union Member States, the EU Working Time Directive (93/104) entitles workers to a minimum of 24 hours of rest per week, principally on Sunday, in addition to 11 hours of rest each working day (between shifts). In most countries, although only one day off per week is prescribed in national legislation, collective agreements or commonly accepted norms set the standard of a five-day week.

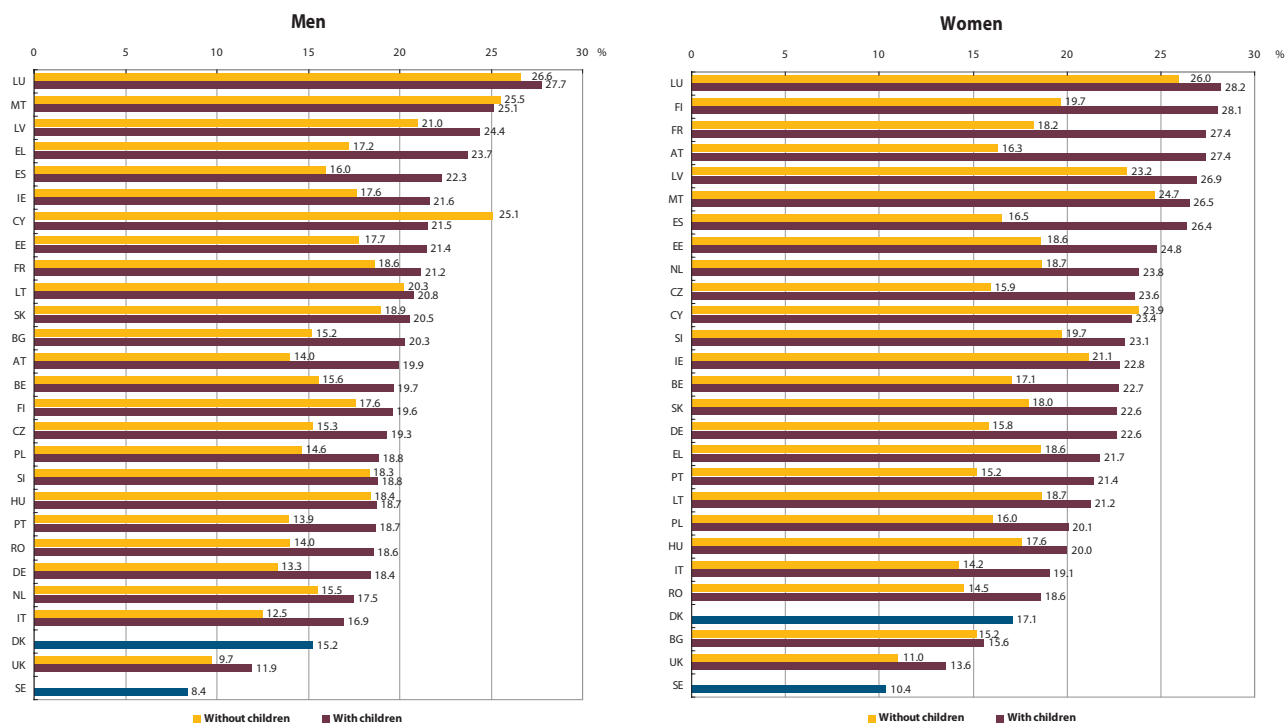
Figure 6.7 presents the share of employees aged 25–49, with and without children, usually working during weekends among all employees. To work on Saturdays or Sundays means working two or more Saturdays or Sundays during a four-week reference period prior to the survey.

Frequently, it is observed that proportionally more workers with children work on weekends, and this can be noted for both men and women. For men, the differences are quite noticeable in Greece, Spain and Austria. The situation of Cypriot men is different: here, men with children work proportionally less on weekends. The same pattern applies to women: here too, proportionally more women with children work on weekends than women without children (with again the notable exception of Cyprus). One reason might be linked to the fact that employees with children have to work in the framework of opening hours of childcare facilities, and instead of working overtime during normal working days to achieve a certain workload have to 'compensate' this during weekends.



**Figure 6.7:** Employees with and without children working on weekends, 2006

*As a percentage of total employees with and without children in the age group 25-49, by gender*



Note: DK and SE are taken from the standard LFS data. The latter makes no distinction between workers with and without children.

Source: Eurostat, LFS.



## 6.4 Flexible working arrangements and care responsibilities

Parents actively participating in the labour force may face difficulties in having their children cared for during holiday periods, when the usual childcare services are less available or closed. As a consequence, they may be forced to take days off or re-arrange their working time in order to compensate for the absence of alternative childcare services. However, caring for children may not be the only reason driving employees to take advantage of flexible working time arrangements; another reason may be that elderly, disabled or otherwise dependent persons in the family need to be cared for.

New working time arrangements increasingly provide tailor-made solutions. The 'flexitime' solution and term-time contracts are just two examples of how the needs of work and private life can be combined. The following pages detail some of the elements mentioned above and aim to provide a quantitative overview of those who are able to change their working arrangements for family reasons, be it for the care of children or other dependent persons. In conclusion, this section will take a look at teleworking, also considered to be a form of working time flexibility.

### 6.4.1 Working time flexibility

Two kinds of flexible working arrangements will be considered in this section, all stemming from the 2005 LFS ad hoc module on reconciliation between work and family life<sup>(5)</sup>, which allows evaluating the degree of work flexibility in the EU Member States:

- Ability to vary the starting or ending times of a working day, either in general (outside particular periods of urgent work) or occasionally;
- Ability to take whole days off (outside particular periods of urgent work) without using holidays and special leave

#### The Labour Force Survey's 2005 ad hoc module

The *ad hoc* module 2005 on 'Reconciliation between work and family life' is specified by Commission Regulation (EC) No 29/2004 of 8 January 2004. Participating countries were all the EU-25 Member States, the three EFTA countries as well as Bulgaria and Romania (the latter two countries having joined the EU on 1 January 2007).

The **aims** of the module were the following:

- Establish if persons participate in the labour force as much they would wish, and where they are unable to do so, whether the reasons are connected with a lack of suitable care services for children and dependent persons:
  - Identification of care responsibilities (children and dependents).
  - Analysis of the consequences on labour participation taking into account the choice/constraint dimension.
  - In case of constraint, identification of the ones linked to the lack or unsuitability of care services.
- Analysis of the degree of flexibility offered at work in terms of reconciliation with family life.
- Estimate to what extent leave or absence is taken (as specified in Council Directive 96/34/EC of 3.6.1996, OJ L145).

For more information please refer to the document 'Reconciliation between work and family life: final report to the 2005 LFS ad hoc module', available at the following address:

[http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-RA-07-011/EN/KS-RA-07-011-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-07-011/EN/KS-RA-07-011-EN.PDF)

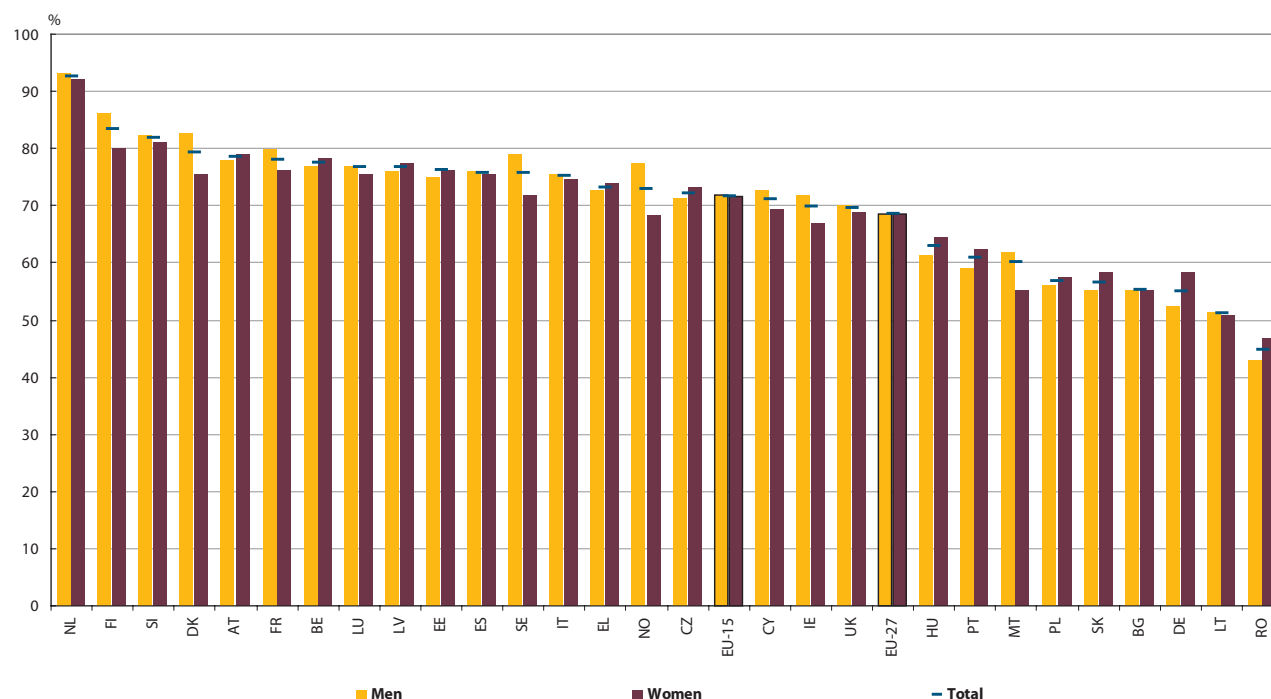
Figure 6.8 presents the proportion of women and men who are able (usually and occasionally) to vary the starting or ending times of their working day (by at least one hour) for family reasons. This can include caring for children but also

for disabled family members or other dependents. The time taken off is normally compensated beforehand or later. But it is not necessarily compensated in terms of hours.

<sup>(5)</sup> See the report: 'Reconciliation between work and family life: final report to the 2005 LFS ad hoc module'.

**Figure 6.8:** Employed persons who can vary the start/end of their working day for family reasons, 2005

*As a proportion of all persons employed in the age group 25-49, by gender*



Note: Varying the start or end of the working day by at least one hour

Source: LFS and ad hoc Module.

Employees with family responsibilities (care responsibilities or any other reasons) appear to have a fair amount of flexibility (be it occasionally or on a permanent basis) in the starting or finishing hours of their working day: at EU-27 level, around 69% actually enjoy a certain degree of freedom. The range between the 'most and least flexible Member State' in this respect is nevertheless wide: from 93% in the Netherlands to 45% in Romania. The situation in the Netherlands is not surprising as this type of flexibility has been 'institutionalised' for many years.

Finland and Slovenia followed the Netherlands with fairly high shares (over 80% of employees), but distinct groups of countries cannot be identified as the shares decrease gradually. Workers in Bulgaria, Germany, Lithuania and Romania, appear to have the least possibilities to determine the start and end of their working day (shares of 55% or less).

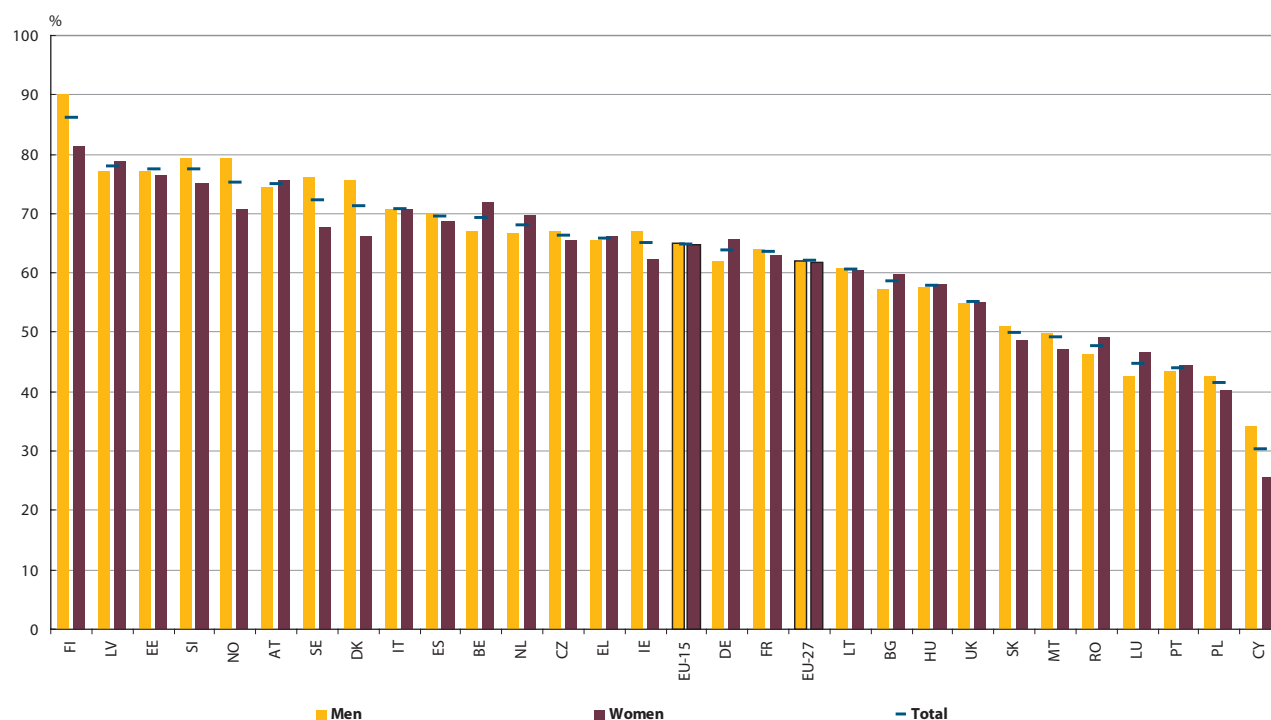
In terms of gender gap, it appears that in general the differences are small. Only in Hungary, Portugal, Slovakia, Romania and Germany were the differences noticeable (between 3 and 4 percentage points). Conversely, men in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Finland) as well as in Malta appear to have more flexibility than their female counterparts (with a difference of between 7 and 8 percentage points).

The second aspect of flexibility looks at the possibility to organise one's working time for family reasons, including care for children, disabled or other dependents, by taking days off without however using holidays or special leave. This includes persons benefiting from 'working time banking' (i.e. where they can work more hours or days in exchange for taking the equivalent time off at some time in the future), as well as those who have free working time who can be absent for a day without any special arrangement.



**Figure 6.9:** Share of employed persons that can take entire days off for family reasons (without using holidays or special leave), 2005

*As a proportion of all persons employed in the age group 25-49, by gender*



Source: LFS and *ad hoc* Module.

At EU-27 level, 62% of employees aged 25–49 have the possibility of taking entire days off for family reasons, with only a marginal difference between men and women (see Figure 6.9). At country level, Finland ranked first, followed by Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia, Norway and Austria (all above 75%). The lower part of the scale included Portugal (44%), Poland (41%) and particularly Cyprus (30%). In Cyprus, employed persons generally do not have the possibility of taking entire days off<sup>(6)</sup>.

The gender gap is noticeable in the Benelux countries and Germany, where more women have this possibility, whereas the opposite applies in the Nordic countries, where significantly more men benefit from this.

The employers' handling of leave or absence of employees will often be discretionary, i.e. the employer will decide whether working times can be altered or days off granted for family reasons. In other cases however, there may be a legal (statutory) obligation to grant employees time off from work.

Statutory time-off provisions differ substantially across European countries. Table 6.14 details these provisions in the various EU Member States and Norway. The information was taken from 'Family-related leave and industrial relations', 2004 (Eurofound) and updated/checked with the Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) information. It reflects the situation as of 1 July 2007.

<sup>(6)</sup> See the report: 'Reconciliation between work and family life: final report to the 2005 LFS *ad hoc* module'

### The Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC)

The Mutual Information System on Social Protection (MISSOC) was established in 1990 by the European Commission as an instrument to serve the continuous and comprehensive exchange of information on social protection between the EU Member States. MISSOC has since been further developed and has become an important central source of information on social protection in all Member States of the European Union. Today, the information system includes the 27 Member States, the three countries of the European Economic Area – Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway – and Switzerland.

MISSOC is based on the close cooperation between the European Commission, the network of the official representatives of the participating countries and the secretariat appointed by the European Commission. The co-ordination of the MISSOC is administered by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities. To ensure the reliability of information published by the MISSOC, each participating country is represented by one or two correspondents from the national ministries or institutions that are responsible for the areas of social protection. The MISSOC network regularly produces updated information on all areas of social protection.

All documents are published on the website of the European Commission, Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, at [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/spsi/missoc\\_fr.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/spsi/missoc_fr.htm)

Leave may be taken to care for a child either for a short period of time for emergencies or short illnesses, or for a relatively longer period—from several weeks to several years—in case of more serious illness or disability.

Long-term leave is often considered as a career break. This may have a negative effect on labour market participation, as workers' skills may depreciate because they may not be using or updating them during the interruption. In addition, at the end of their career break, they will have less work experience compared to those not having taken time off.

Certain countries limit the provisions for the care of children, while others include adult family members as well. In certain cases, a distinction is made according to whether the child is living in a single- or dual-parent family.

In Greece, parents working in companies which employ at least 50 persons and who are responsible for disabled children are entitled to a one-hour reduction of their daily working hours, with a corresponding reduction in their wages. There is also provision for parents of school-age children under 16 to be absent from work to visit school for a maximum of four days per year.

**Table 6.4:** Statutory time-off provisions (situation as of 2007)

	Type	Duration
BE	Short leave	Leave for "imperious reasons", 10 days per year
CZ		Financial support for care of family members (Podpora při ošetrování člena rodiny) for employees caring for a sick child or adult family member (and in some cases a healthy child). Conditions: Common household with the employee (except children under 10 years), no other person available to provide care and no possibility of hospitalisation. Maximum duration: 9 calendar days in each individual case, 16 calendar days for single parents caring for at least one child under compulsory school age.
DK	No statutory but collective agreements	(most collective agreements provide for at least a paid leave for the child's first day sick ; often supplementary paid leaves to care for a child)
DE	Short leave	10 per parent per child per year up to maximum of 25 per parent per year <b>Lone parents :</b> 20 per child per year up to maximum of 50 per year
EE		Up to 14 calendar days for nursing a sick child up to 12 years of age in hospital. Up to 10 calendar days for nursing a child under 3 years or a disabled child up to 16 years of age at home when the regular carer is sick or in hospital due to confinement, and up to 7 calendar days for nursing a sick family member at home. 14 calendar days for nursing a child up to 12 years of age at home.
IE	1) Short leave 2) Long leave	<b>1)</b> 3 days per year per parent per child (in a limit of 5 days each 3 year) <b>2)</b> 65 weeks 'homemaker scheme' to care for a child o relative
EL	Short leave	6 days per year – 8 days per year if 2 children – 12 days per year if 3 or more children
ES	1) Short leave 2) Long leave	<b>1)</b> 2 (+ 2 days if a travel is necessary) under presentation of justifications (accidents, serious illnesses, hospitalisation, death) <b>2)</b> Up to one year (or more if collective agreements) – In case of accident/illness
FR	1) Short sickness 2) Long leave 3) Other	<b>1)</b> 3 days per parent per year (5 days if child under 1 year or if 3 or more children under 16) <b>2)</b> 1 year (4 months renewable twice) for sick, disabled or accident (+ need of care) <b>3)</b> 6 months (3 months renewable) when a relative's life is at stake (end of life, serious accident or illness)
IT	1) Short leave (sick)  2) Short leave (handicapped)  3) Long leave (severely)	<b>1)</b> Sick child under 3: any duration Sick child aged 3-8: 5 days a year per parent Handicapped child or parent: any duration <b>2)</b> if child under 3: any duration if child 3 and over: 3 days per child per month for the father or the mother <b>3)</b> up to 2 years (continuous or split in days, weeks..).
LU	Short leave	2 days per year per parent per child (possibility of extension in case of exceptional gravity)
HU	1) Short leave  2) Short suppl. unpaid 3) long leave	<b>1)</b> Unlimited if child under 1 84 days per year if 1-3 42 days if 3-6 (84 if lone parent) 14 days if 6-12 (28 if lone parent) <b>2)</b> 1 child: 2 days per year / 2 children: 4 days per year ; 3 or more : 7 days per year. <b>3)</b> 2 years (for sick or handicapped relative)
NL	1) Emergency leave 2) Short leave	<b>1)</b> 2 days per emergency event <b>2)</b> 10 days per year for sick child
AT	1) Short leave 2) Longer leave	<b>1)</b> Sick children and relative care leave – 1 week per year – a second week per year if child up to 12 and under certain conditions <b>2)</b> Family emergency leave, 3 months (renewable once)
PL	1) Short leave 2) care benefit for special leave 3) Long leave	<b>1)</b> 2 days per year per employee <b>2)</b> a child under the age of 8 (in specified cases), a sick child under the age of 14 (for a maximum 60 days per year), another member of the family (for 14 days per year). <b>3)</b> up to 3 years children with chronic illness or disability
PT	1) Short leave 2) Long leave	<b>1)</b> Aged under 10 : 30 days per year (extensible if hospitalisation) Aged over 10 : 15 days (also for other relative) <b>2)</b> Severely disabled or chronic ill children: maximum period of 6 months (possibility of extension up to 4 years)
RO		Insured persons are entitled to sick child care leave and benefit. 85% of the average insured gross earnings over the last 6 months are paid for caring for a sick child aged less than 7 years or until 18 years in the case of a disabled child suffering from inter-current diseases.
SI	Sick leave to care for relative	7 days per employee (15 days if child under 7 and handicapped child). In case of need for longer care medical, commission could prolong the leave up to 30 days and up to six month for children.
SK	Short leave	Maximum of 10 calendar days if a relative is sick and in need of care, or if a child under the age of 10 needs supervision in case of enclosed school facility.
FI	1) Short sick child leave 2) Short unpaid leave 3) Long (child disability)	<b>1)</b> 4 per sick child for one parent at a time (for each event) <b>2)</b> For family urgent reasons <b>3)</b> For chronically ill or disabled child needing daily care
SE	Leave	60 days per child per year per parent
UK	'reasonable' leave	if dispute with the employer on the leave and its duration, it is left to a court to determine what is 'reasonable'.
NO	Short leave	1 or 2 children: 10 days per parent (20 days if lone parent) 3 and more children: 15 per parent (30 if lone parent) Theses quotas are doubled if chronically ill or disabled child

Source: Eurofound, MISSOC

The working time flexibility offered is in some cases not sufficient to make people satisfied with their work-private life balance. The Labour Force Survey provides an indicator

showing the proportion of persons desirous to work less in order to spend more time with the persons cared for, as well as the share of persons wanting to work or to work more.

**Table 6.5:** Employed persons wishing to change the organisation of their working life and care responsibilities, 2005

*Persons with caring responsibilities, as a proportion of all employed persons in the age group 25–49, by gender*

	Wish to work or to work more (and reduce caring time)			Wish to work less to have more time for caring		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
<b>EU-27</b>	2.3	1.8	2.9	5.9	5.0	7.0
<b>EU-15</b>	2.8	2.2	3.6	6.5	5.7	7.5
<b>BE</b>	1.0	0.6	1.4	4.7	3.3	6.3
<b>BG</b>	0.5	:	:	4.7	2.7	6.7
<b>CZ</b>	0.9	0.4	1.5	8.2	5.7	11.4
<b>DK</b>	0.6	:	0.9	13.8	11.2	16.7
<b>DE</b>	1.5	:	2.8	1.7	1.3	2.1
<b>EE</b>	0.5 u	:	:	6.3	4.4	8.3
<b>IE</b>	1.3	0.5	2.2	6.6	4.4	9.4
<b>EL</b>	1.0	0.6	1.6	11.0	6.9	17.1
<b>ES</b>	1.9	1.1	3.1	7.8	7.0	8.9
<b>FR</b>	7.7	8.6	6.7	1.5	0.7	2.4
<b>IT</b>	2.2	1.5	3.2	14.7	14.3	15.3
<b>CY</b>	0.4 u	:	:	17.3	11.0	24.8
<b>LV</b>	3.3	:	4.3	22.1	16.5	26.5
<b>LT</b>	:	:	:	2.2	:	3.5
<b>LU</b>	0.6 u	:	1.1 u	0.8 u	:	1.5 u
<b>HU</b>	0.8	0.5	1.1	6.0	3.7	8.8
<b>MT</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:
<b>NL</b>	5.2	2.3	8.6	2.8	2.4	3.4
<b>AT</b>	1.9	0.9	3.2	4.3	4.3	4.3
<b>PL</b>	0.2	0.2	0.3 u	1.0	0.6	1.5
<b>PT</b>	1.4	0.9	1.9	7.5	4.5	10.9
<b>RO</b>	0.2	:	0.2 u	2.3	1.3	3.6
<b>SI</b>	0.6	0.3	0.9 u	12.5	10.1	15.2
<b>SK</b>	0.7	0.7	0.8	3.3	1.6	5.2
<b>FI</b>	:	:	:	13.9	12.3	15.6
<b>SE</b>	1.5	0.7	2.5	5.5	5.4	5.6
<b>UK</b>	1.4	0.8	2.1	6.2	4.8	7.8
<b>NO</b>	0.8	: u	1.5	4.6	4.0	5.3

Notes: unreliable or uncertain data due to small sample size: 'u' data not available

Source: LFS and ad hoc Module.

Women and men in the EU are largely satisfied with their current working time arrangements, as around 90% of employed persons aged 25 to 49 do not want to change their working arrangements. Only 2.3% of the surveyed individuals stated they wanted to start working or to work more, whereas 5.9% expressed the wish to work less in order to have more time for caring (see Table 6.5). In all Member States, except France and the Netherlands where childcare provisions are well developed, more workers expressed the wish to work less.

This was especially the case in Denmark, Greece, Italy, Cyprus, Slovenia and Finland; particularly for women (except for Italy where the gender gap was fairly small).

Workers may also assume caring responsibilities for persons other than their own children, including time taken off work to care for children under 15 other than one's own as well as ill, disabled or elderly relatives/friends aged 15 and over in need of care. These valuable services to society have been considered in Chapter 4.2.





## 6.4.2: Workplace flexibility: working at home or teleworking

There are variations in the definition of teleworking: in a broad sense, teleworking refers to any telesales staff, freelance businesses, consultants, mobile workers and technical support staff. In a narrower sense, teleworking specifically refers to people who use information and communication technologies to perform work away from their main place of work.

The European framework agreement on telework was concluded by the European social partners in July 2002. The agreement lays down working standards for people doing telework, defined as 'a form of organising and/or performing work, using information technology, in the context of an employment contract/relationship, where work, which could also be performed at the employer's premises, is carried out away from those premises on a regular basis'. It also recalls that teleworkers benefit from the same legal protection as employees working at the employer's premises and defines a general framework for using telework at the workplace, in a way which corresponds to employers' and workers' needs. It concentrates on the aspects which are specific to working away from the employer's premises and highlights key areas requiring adaptation or specific attention such as employment conditions, data protection, privacy, equipment, health and safety, work organisation, training, and collective rights. The agreement concerns teleworkers with an employment contract and does cover self-employed teleworkers. Neither does it concern call centre employees performing their work at the premises of the call centre employing them.

In 2006, the social partners jointly presented a report on the implementation of the agreement across Europe four years after its conclusion<sup>(7)</sup> (21 Member States, excluding Cyprus, Slovakia, Estonia, Lithuania – but including the non-EU countries Iceland and Norway). Sixteen countries have implemented the agreement by way of national social partnership agreements; Ireland and the UK have introduced guides and codes of good practice; Hungary, Portugal and the Czech Republic have transposed the code in their labour laws.

The number of teleworkers concerned by the agreement was estimated at 4.5 million employees in 2002 (Dublin Foundation, 2002). There are no comparable cross-border data to measure its development since then. It is generally considered that telework is more widespread in some sectors of activity, such as telecommunications, and that it is more adapted to qualified workers. Moreover, the importance of telework varies greatly from one country to another.

Teleworking offers benefits to both workers and employers. It allows for a better balance between work and family life and provides companies with the opportunity to combine work and flexibility. Other benefits are often invoked such as the reduction of costs and absenteeism for enterprises, a wider choice in the place of residence, etc. Teleworking is often referred to as 'remote working'. The opportunity to do this varies considerably between occupations, depending partly on the possibility to take work home.

The successful management of teleworking requires regular communication and the building of trust. There is still a degree of management resistance to teleworking, however, which is largely based on a fear of relinquishing control over employees' activities. Changing traditional 'command and control' attitudes and practices, which are a significant barrier to the further diffusion of teleworking, could prove to be a difficult task<sup>(8)</sup>.

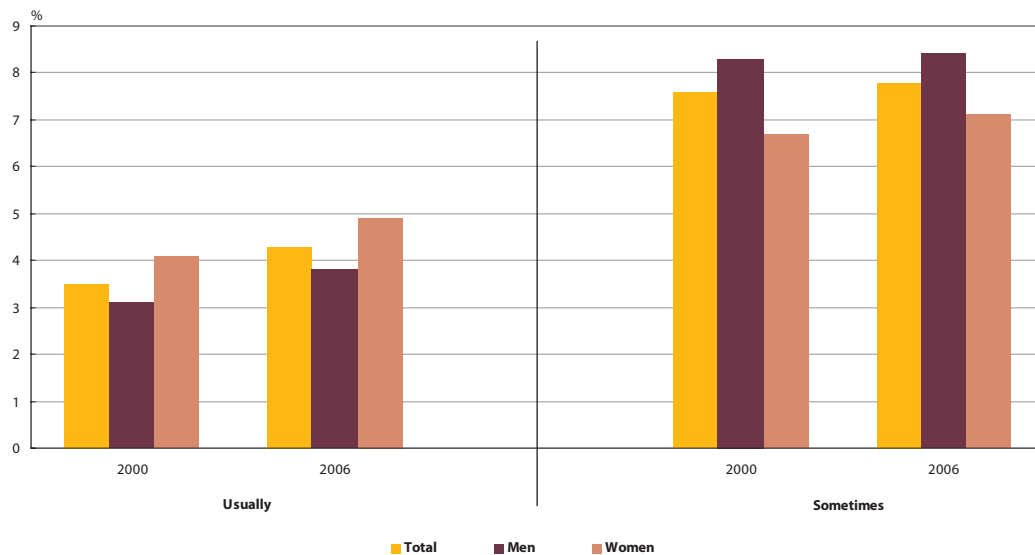
Indeed, teleworking on a regular basis among workers aged 25–49 has progressed only slowly (see Figure 6.10). At the European level, occasional telework progressed by less than 0.5 percentage points over the period 2000–2006, while usual telework recorded a slightly higher increase (by about 1 percentage point). Considering the gender-specific distribution of household and caring responsibilities, it comes as no surprise that usual telework is generally more widespread among women, whereas occasional telework is more common among men.

<sup>(7)</sup> For more details:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/social\\_dialogue/docs/telework\\_report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/social_dialogue/docs/telework_report_en.pdf)

<sup>(8)</sup> Dobbins, T. (2001): *Teleworking in Focus* – European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) / Eurofound

**Figure 6.10:** Evolution of the European teleworking population, 2000/2006

*As a percentage of all persons employed in the age group 25–49, by gender*



Source: Eurostat, LFS

According to the available country data (Table 6.6), usual telework is relatively more common among Finnish and Austrian men (9.9% and 8.8% of all employed men aged 25–49 respectively) and among French and Austrian women (11.6% and 11.2% respectively). Romania registered the lowest shares of teleworkers among the population in employment aged 25–49, with less than 1%.

Surprisingly, the United Kingdom and Denmark reported the highest percentage of occasional teleworkers for both men and women, exceeding by more than 10 percentage points the share of other Member States.

**Table 6.6:** Teleworking in the European Member States, 2006

*Population in employment working from home, as a percentage of total employment, for the age group 25–49, by gender*

	Men		Women	
	Usually	Sometimes	Usually	Sometimes
<b>EU-27</b>	3.8	8.4	4.9	7.1
<b>EU-15</b>	4.3	9.4	5.4	7.6
<b>BE</b>	8.6	8.8	8.3	7.2
<b>BG</b>	1.9	2.5	2.0	3.8
<b>CZ</b>	2.5	6.3	4.2	5.0
<b>DK</b>	2.9	28.6	4.5	21.8
<b>DE</b>	3.7	10.7	4.5	7.3
<b>EE</b>	4.5 u	4.8 u	4.1 u	5.5 u
<b>IE</b>	8.2 p	6.6 p	4.1 p	4.3 p
<b>EL</b>	1.0	2.4	2.2	3.5
<b>ES</b>	2.8	2.5	2.8	2.1
<b>FR</b>	8.6	9.7	11.6	6.5
<b>IT</b>	3.7	1.8	3.5	1.3
<b>CY</b>	:	:	1.0 u	:
<b>LV</b>	2.0 u	3.5	3.2	4.4
<b>LT</b>	1.5 u	2.2 u	1.6 u	3.7 u
<b>LU</b>	5.7	1.6 u	10.1	1.1 u
<b>HU</b>	1.7	4.5	2.1	5.3
<b>MT</b>	3.0 u	4.4 u	6.0 u	6.2 u
<b>NL</b>	5.7	: u	5.8	: u
<b>AT</b>	8.8	12.7	11.2	8.0
<b>PL</b>	2.2	6.8	3.0	9.8
<b>PT</b>	0.7	4.2	1.4	2.8
<b>RO</b>	0.5	0.2 u	0.8	0.3 u
<b>SI</b>	3.6	6.7	7.1	8.2
<b>SK</b>	3.5	4.1	4.6	4.7
<b>FI</b>	9.9	9.5	8.9	6.6
<b>SE</b>	2.6	11.2	2.6	6.8
<b>UK</b>	1.6 u	26.8 u	4.1	22.5
<b>IS</b>	11.9	27.3	10.6 u	23.9 u
<b>NO</b>	5.5	7.8	2.9	6.1
<b>CH</b>	2.0	12.8	6.2	13.0

Notes: 'u': unreliable or uncertain data, 'p': provisional.

Source: Eurostat, LFS

Teleworking has many particularities and is often linked to a number of conditions, laid down by the enterprises concerned or provided for on an institutional basis. An exact comparison between countries based on a set of common criteria therefore appears difficult.

Many factors favour the expansion of teleworking, including the increase in the use of the Internet, thus fostering a 'net mentality'; the necessity to react quickly to market changes, thus increasing productivity and reducing costs; the necessity for young people to "invent their job", which makes them discover how convenient it is to start new tele-activities without the need for expensive offices in the city centre, designer desks and chairs, etc.

On the other hand, there are factors that may hamper the development of teleworking. A recent survey carried out on behalf of the European Commission shows that the major obstacle to the implementation of teleworking resides in problems related to the security of connections. Enterprises fear that their software and communications can be spied upon and sensitive data can fall in the hands of unscrupulous competitors. An additional problem lies in the difficulty for teleworkers to update their skills and the risk of being discriminated against in favour of 'traditional' employees.

There is no doubt that if teleworking is to grow, it needs a clear regulatory framework to protect employees and their contractual relationship with the enterprise in order to avoid it being used for unofficial or illegal purposes.

## 6.5 Contributions of the employer

Flexible working time arrangements may be positive for the employee and can also lead to a variety of positive impacts at company level, including improved employee performance, reduced absenteeism levels, better recruitment and retention potential as well as greater time efficiency. All these benefits can enhance a company's overall productivity and competitiveness.

Flexible working time arrangements can be implemented at the level of the enterprise (collective agreement, directive and/or informal practice) or by national legislation to be applied either to all employees (as is the case in Germany,

Denmark, Lithuania, the Netherlands and Poland) or only to working parents (Austria, the Czech Republic, Greece, Finland, Portugal, Slovenia, the United Kingdom and Norway). A detailed presentation of national legislations would go beyond the scope on this section. Nevertheless, a comprehensive overview can be found in the following publication: 'Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries', European Commission, 2005.

The following table provides an overview of work-family arrangements provided by enterprises:

**Table 6.7:** Examples of work-family arrangements provided by enterprises

Flexible working arrangements	Leaves
Part-time work	(Extra statutory) maternity leave
Flexible arrangements	Parental leave
Job-sharing	Paternity leave
Teleworking/ working at home	Leave for family reasons (incl. Elderly)
Term-Time work	Adoption leave
Saving hours	Career break scheme
Childcare arrangements	Supportive arrangements
Workplace nursery	Work-family management training
Contracted childcare places	Employees counselling/assistance
Childminding	Work-family co-ordinator
Childcare resource and referral	Research on employees needs
Financial assistance	Financial contributions
Holiday play schemes/summer camps	

Source: Den Dulk, 'Work-family arrangements in organisations', 2001

The availability of flexible working time in a company depends on many elements: sector, size, workforce composition, economic situation of the enterprise and possible relevant legislation in force, to name but a few. Among the larger sectors, services are usually required and provide more flexibility than the industrial sector. Also, the public sector is often considered to offer more arrangements for an improved work-private life balance than the private sector.

Within an enterprise, regardless of its sector of activity and its size, factors such as the share and age of female employees, the proportion of older workers, the skills-composition of the enterprise staff as well as seasonal variations in the workload may also play a role.

Although larger establishments have more scope for introducing different types of flexibility, smaller enterprises require solutions that take into account smaller economic fluctuations. While larger establishments often have formalised arrangements, smaller establishments often propose informal arrangements which may indeed be more efficient.

The employer's involvement (voluntary or collective agreements) is summarised in Table 6.8, which presents various examples of solutions at country level. This table also takes a closer look at specific aspects, offering an insight on entitlement, (dis)incentives by national authorities, national company policies, etc.

**Table 6.8: Employers' involvement in flexible working-time arrangements**

<b>BE</b> Part-time work is widespread. Overall telework seems to be quite widespread in Flanders. 1 out of 5 organisations offers this possibility to at least part of its workforce. Telework is most likely to be possible in the public and non-profit sectors.	combining management posts with part-time working hours as a problem: four out of ten believe that a management function cannot be combined with having the main responsibilities for a family.
<b>BG</b> Very limited involvement in flexible working-time arrangements.	<b>AT</b> Flexible practices are generally more common as an entitlement in large, rather than small firms – of which there are many in Austria. Small firms are more likely to provide reconciliation measures on an informal basis. A survey of 1998 showed that 23% of firms offer working hour reduction or 8% teleworking because of care commitments.
<b>CZ</b> Employers offer very few opportunities for part-time employment, and the opportunities are not very attractive for employees. Flexible working hours are most widely used in the administrative professions and in small organisations with up to 50 employees. Teleworking is beginning to be applied in some fields. Working from home is widely used in firms with a small number of employees (under 10 employees). Jobsharing and saving hours/personal accounts are not common.	<b>PL</b> The supply of part-time work in Poland does not meet the demand; there are numerous calls to increase the provision of part-time working arrangements. Because of a relatively high tax wedge (around 40%) employers find it more expensive to employ several part-time workers instead of one full-time. Telework is still relatively underdeveloped, but it is developing fastest in information services, consulting, accounting and translation. Estimates of teleworking used by firms range between 2 and 11%.
<b>DK</b> The idea of making it possible to take part-time parental leave is a growing success, especially for mothers – it makes it possible to start children gradually in a care facility as well as a gradual return to work. Some employers (as for instance IKEA) accept part-time work (with lower pay) 6 months after the parent has returned to work as well as fixed working-time (on the 'eight to four' scheme) for parents.	<b>PT</b> The possibility of working part-time or with flexible working hours has a limited impact on the Portuguese labour market. Flexibility is higher in the more qualified occupations, namely intellectual and scientific and managerial occupations. There is no information on jobsharing or teleworkers in Portugal, but the share seems low. What is recurrent in some Portuguese enterprises is a rather informal and random treatment that permits workers to take some time off (with or without time compensation) for personal matters.
<b>DE</b> Most employers accept the wishes of employees to reduce working-time. Teleworking: a study found that 23% of all employees could work partially at home.	<b>RO</b> No information in the national report
<b>EE</b> Part-time work and flexible working hours are rare.	<b>SI</b> A survey shows that 36% of organisations has unwritten flexible working practices and 20% has written policies. The share of part-time work is low (6%).
<b>EL</b> Flexible working-time arrangements are a marginal phenomenon in Greece.	<b>SK</b> No information in the national report
<b>ES</b> About 60% of especially large and medium Spanish firms allow part-time work (though the share of part-time workers is below EU average). However, only 9% allows this for all employees. 59% of firms declared using flexitime in 2002, but only in 17% this is available to all employees. Few Spanish firms use jobsharing in practice. 9.5% of large enterprises allow for two part-time employees to share a fulltime job, however, only 0.7% make this arrangement available to all their employees. 21% of the medium/large enterprises declare they allow to their employees to work from home, only 4% have made this arrangement available for all their employees. A very small percentage of enterprises have a time banking account for their employees allowing them to exchange additional vacation periods against pay reductions. Alternatively, this arrangement allows also for exchanging a reduction of holidays against paid hours.	<b>FI</b> Part-time work is not common (despite Finnish legislation that determines that all parents with children in the second school year or younger working in full-time jobs have the right to reduce their working hours and work part-time). Specific arrangements are subject to agreement between the employer and employee.
<b>FR</b> In general there is now a 35-hour week, but negotiations on the reduction of working time have led to an increase in atypical working hours, variable working time (modulation) and flexible hours. This process, which was gradually introduced in the 1980s, seems to be spreading more widely with the introduction of the reduction of working-time.	<b>SE</b> Part-time work has decreased since 1980. This is related to the fact that there are many firms/organisations that offer the opportunity of flexible working-time during the day-time to all of their employees. There are other working-time arrangements as well but these are not as widespread. Women with higher education and higher incomes tend to return to full-time work more often while women with lower education and low incomes return to part-time work.
<b>IE</b> The share of companies with part-time working policies vary per survey (37-75%). About half of the policies seem informal. About 5% of companies seem to offer jobsharing (most women) and about 4% of workers are teleworkers. The IBEC study identifies 13% of companies offering flexitime work, with 63% with a formal policy in place and the remaining 37% an informal policy relating to flexitime.	<b>UK</b> Several organisations have enhanced the statutory right to request flexible working, for example by extending it to all carers or all employees. Around 80% of employers provide at least one of the following seven flexible working-time arrangements: part-time working, jobsharing, flexitime, annualised hours, term-time working, compressed working weeks and reduced hours working. Of these by far the most common is part-time work – offered by 74% of employers. Aside from the provision for part-time work, flexible working-time arrangements is not widespread, with less than a quarter of employers providing any one of the other six arrangements. Just over two fifths of workplaces (44%) made available two or more arrangements (Woodland et al. 2003: 21). Flexible working arrangements are more prevalent in workplaces which are in the public and not-for-profit sectors, or have recognised unions and good human resource policies.
<b>IT</b> The availability of part-time work is limited. Progression towards a more flexible working hours system started later in Italy than in other countries and has been much slower.	<b>IS</b> Part-time work is common among pupils and students as well as mothers with young children. Flexibility as concerns working-time arrangements is first and foremost in hours of work. A survey shows that 63% of those employed and living in and around Reykjavik aged 25-64 in 2003 stated that they had worked flexible hours and 50% answered that they had worked from home in the last 12 months. Working from home and flexible working hours were more common among managers, employers and professionals than other occupational groups.
<b>CY</b> The only type of flexible work arrangement that currently exists in Cyprus is part-time work and this is also seen as the most popular.	<b>LI</b> The only available figures refer to part-time work. In 2000, almost half of the women in gainful employment were working part-time. There is no additional information, neither is there any information available on flexible working hours for parents, jobsharing, teleworking or personal working-time accounts.
<b>LV</b> Part-time work is not a widespread employment pattern (only 10.5% of employees, mainly women). There are a limited number of jobs (mainly in the service sector) that accept part-time workers. There is no data on other flexible working arrangements.	<b>NO</b> The opportunities for part-time work are favourable in the Norwegian labour market. The large majority of employees have limited time flexibility. More men than women have flexible time schedules; and time flexibility increases with increasing educational level. At the local level there is more flexibility than reflected in central agreements. Regulated flexible working-time arrangements are usually based on individual time accounts, in which time can be saved and withdrawn according to specific rules. About 1 in 4 employees report to have regulated 'flexitime'.
<b>LT</b> Part-time work may be by agreement established between the employee and the employer by decreasing the number of working days per week or shortening a working day (shift), or doing both. About 9% of workers work part-time, women a little more than men.	
<b>LU</b> The strict regulation of part-time contracts in Luxembourg discourages employers to take on parttime employees. The rate of part-time workers is quite below the European average. Jobsharing is restricted to certain circumstances and has to be authorised by the Ministry of Labour. The portion of the active persons who work from home is higher for women than for men (9.4% and 8.2% respectively).	
<b>HU</b> Part-time work, flexible working-times and teleworking are not common. Jobsharing does not exist. No information available on saving accounts/personal accounts.	
<b>MT</b> Flexible working-time is mainly seen in the patterns of shift workers and not as part of company policy. Jobsharing and teleworking are not common practice.	
<b>NL</b> Despite the high (female) part-time rate, employers are still reluctant to accept requests for part-time working hours especially in the private sector and in higher occupational levels. Most employers regard	

Source: 'Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries', 2005



In addition to providing working time flexibility, some larger enterprises may also offer their employees additional services such as company-specific childcare facilities, especially when public or private childcare facilities are inconvenient in terms of opening hours or overly expensive. Reasons often mentioned for such incentives include the reduction of staff

turnover due to family obligations, higher job attractiveness and improving the company's image. Table 6.9 gives an overview of employers' involvement in childcare facilities. In many Eastern and Southern European Member States, company involvement in providing childcare facilities is either very limited or non-existent.

**Table 6.9: Employers' involvement in childcare facilities**

BE	No information available
BG	The employers do not play an important role in the provision of childcare services. The childcare institutions that existed under the state enterprises before the reform were closed at the beginning of transition due to financial reasons, enterprise restructuring or liquidation.
CZ	Little company involvement. The so-called 'workplace kindergartens' operate only exceptionally in some large enterprises (i.e. Škoda).
DK	Limited company involvement
DE	Little company involvement; less than 0.5% of all places are provided by employers for their employees.
EE	Limited company involvement
EL	Undertakings and services of the private and public sector that employ at least 300 workers are obliged to provide adequate space for a crèche/nursery for the children of their personnel when they build new premises. This provision has faced resistance from employers and their organisations, however. At this moment, only the Public Power Company, the Commercial Bank of Greece and the Ministry of Culture run their own nurseries. In contrast, some social security schemes or big private firms make deals with private nurseries and provide to the persons insured access to childcare services free of charge. This is the case for all social security schemes in the banking sector and big employers such as the Greek Telecom Company (OTE), KERANIS (tobacco industry), Greek Petroleum (ELPE), FOENIX (insurance company) and INTRACOM (ICT group).
ES	Very limited company involvement.
FR	Major companies offer (or participate in providing) childcare services, examples included banks, (university) hospitals, Michelin, and the Post Office. In total, 224 company crèches provide 15 000 of the 200 000 crèche-places in France (7.5%). Since 2003, state support for company crèches has been introduced in the form of tax credit corresponding to 60% of the operating costs of new structures.
IE	Only a few companies, mostly in the public sector, provide childcare services.
IT	No company involvement.
CY	No company involvement.
LV	Very few companies provide kindergartens.
LT	No information available.
LU	Some major companies (banks, hospitals) offer childcare services. The Ministry of Family, Social Solidarity and Youth uses part of its budget to promote the creation of day care centres by private individuals or companies.
HU	Since the transition, employers usually do not have their own childcare institution anymore, but in some cases they subsidise public kindergartens in order to support their own employees.
MT	No company involvement.
NL	The provision of (formal) childcare is seen as a combined responsibility of the government, the employers and the employee. Since the introduction of the Childcare Act on 1 January 2005, employers are supposed, but not obliged, to pay 1/3 of the childcare bill (each employer 1/6).
AT	Childcare facilities at company level hardly play a role in Austria. According to the Mikrozensus survey of 2002, only 0.6% of all children cared for out of family attended a company kindergarten.
PL	Very little company involvement (less than 1% of private firms run childcare centres for children of their employees). In case of public companies financial donation to childcare facilities is sometimes practised, depending on the economic performance of the donating establishment.
PT	No information available.
RO	No company involvement.
SI	Very little company involvement. Two big pharmaceutical companies have kindergartens within/near the company premises.
SK	Very little company involvement.
FI	No company involvement.
SE	No company involvement.
UK	8% of employers provide some form of childcare or related support facilities – covering around a quarter of all employees in workplaces with five or more employees. Large firms (>250 employees) are more likely to make this provision than small firms, and the public sector was almost four times more likely to make this provision than private sector workplaces.
IS	No company involvement.
LI	Hardly any company involvement. One of the few exceptions is the country's public administration: the Liechtenstein government has established a day nursery for the children of its employees.
NO	No company involvement.

Source: 'Reconciliation of work and private life: A comparative review of thirty European countries', 2005

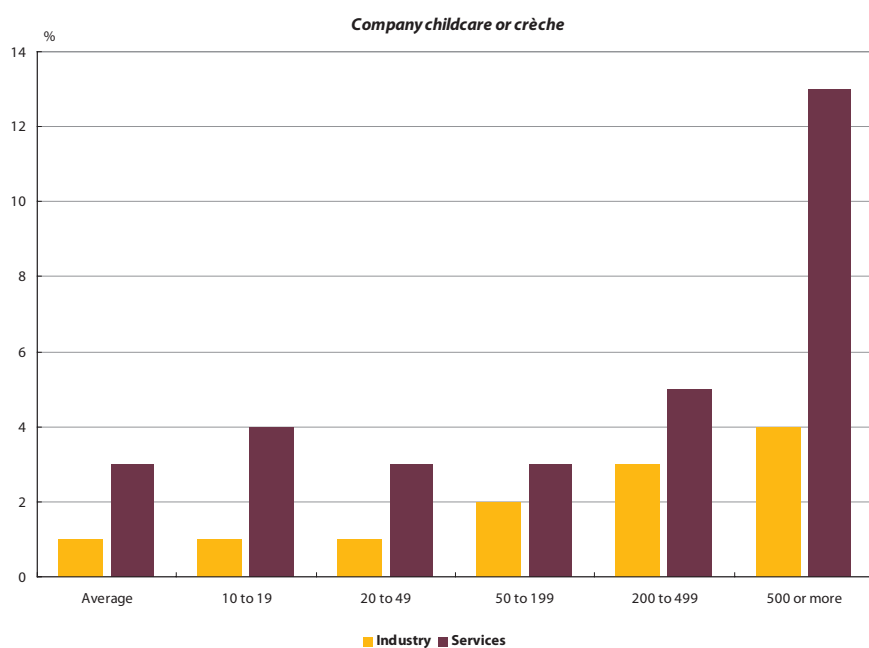


According to the Establishment Survey on Working Time 2004–2005<sup>(9)</sup>, enterprises offering specific childcare provisions are more than twice as numerous in the services sector than in industry.

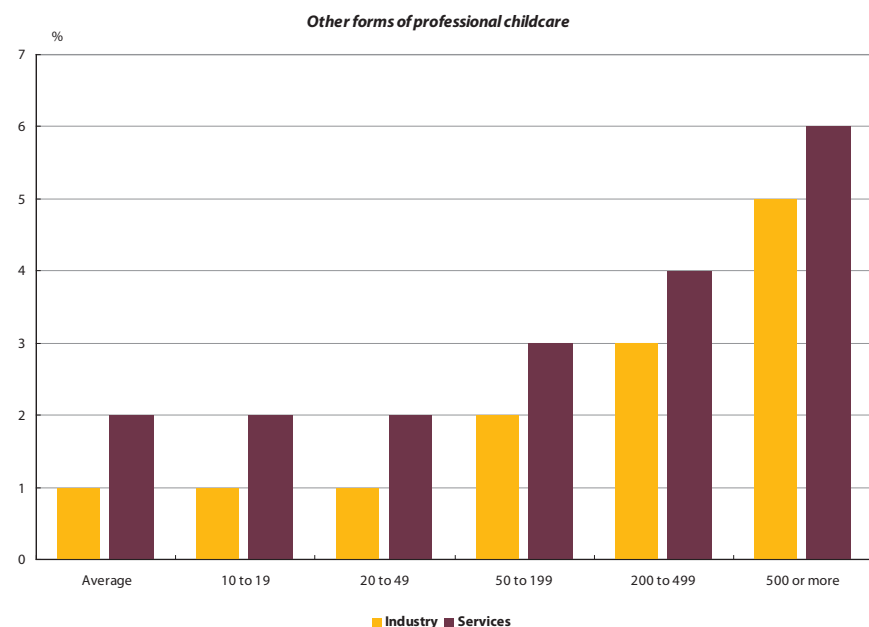
On average, only 3% (Industry 1%) of all establishments covered by the survey offered a company-owned kindergarten or crèche service; a further 2% (Industry 1%) offered, sometimes in addition to a company kindergarten or crèche facility, other forms of professional childcare help, e.g. a

<sup>(9)</sup> For more information on the survey please refer to the box on the 'Establishment Survey on Working Time 2004–2005'.

**Figure 6.11:** Childcare facilities offered by enterprises, by sector and size (%)



Source: ESWT, 2004-2005.



Source: ESWT, 2004-2005.



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## Reconciliation between work, private and family life in the European Union

Work is a source of income, professional satisfaction and social contact. However, work is not always easy to combine with family life and other private activities, especially for parents. Reconciling both demands is an important issue for many citizens in the European Union.

This publication looks at various aspects of the issue of reconciliation of work with family life. It features discussions of the data sources used and gives an overview of the differences in the relevant legal arrangements in the Member States. The report starts with a description of the labour market situation, including developments in part-time work, fixed-term contracts and household composition. The following chapters cover working hours with special attention to unpaid family work, childcare and other care services, maternity and parental leave and flexibility in working time arrangements, including atypical working times such as working at night or at the weekend.

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