

# **EWCO-Comparative Studies**

Beitrag aus dem

Institut der deutschen Wirtschaft Köln

zum

European Working Conditions Observatory (EWCO)

## **Working time in the European Union**

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The case of Germany

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# 1 Duration of work

## 1.1 Average weekly hours

A study by the Institute for Employment Research (Institut für Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, IAB) indicates that the reduction of weekly working hours over the last five years can be attributed to two main causes:

- a decline in the number of employees who have to pay social security contributions,
- an increase in the number of part-time employees.

The IAB study analyses the development of employment, working time and working volume by age and gender in a long-time perspective, i.e. from 1991 to 2004. On the one hand, the number of employees who have to pay social security contributions declined from 39,144,000 persons in 2000 to 38,853,000 in 2004. This decline has predominantly affected employees who work full time. Their share of the workforce dropped from 86.7% in 2000 to 80.1% in 2004. However, the ratio of part-time workers increased from 11.5% (2000) to 14.1% (2004). The study concludes that the increase in part-time work mainly led to a reduction in weekly (as well as annual) working hours.

This analysis is in line with data from the EU Labour Force Survey. Average weekly working hours dropped slightly from 35.7 hours per week in 2000 to 34.6 hours per week in 2006. Furthermore, more people work part time, with average weekly working hours for male employees rising from 15.7 hours per week in 2000 to 16.8 hours per week in 2006. Female employees holding a part-time position worked, on average, 18.3 hours per week in 2000 and 18.4 hours per week in 2006.

## 1.2 Annual hours worked

As the Euro Labour Force Survey indicates, a reduction in annual working hours has characterised the development of working time since 2000. The number of hours worked per year dropped from an average of 1,387 hours in 2000 to 1,351 in 2006.

As noted above, a rise in the share of part-time workers as well as a decline in full-time work has contributed to the decline in the number of hours worked – both on a weekly or annual basis. Apart from the abrogation of the public holiday to mark the religious day of repentance

in 1995 (with the exception of the federal state of Saxony), the number of public holidays granted to employees has not changed greatly over recent years. Depending on the federal state, 9 to 13 public holidays are granted to employees.

Social partners' points of view are presented in the section about collective bargaining below.

### 1.3 Days of work per week

Please see section 'The working day and working week', below..

### 1.4 Full-time and part-time working

In 2001, the Law on Part-Time Work (*Teilzeit- und Befristungsgesetz, TzBfG*) came into effect. The TzBfG seeks to protect part-time workers from discrimination. Its provisions state that, after six months of employment, every person working in a company that employs more than 15 employees can claim the right to work a lower number of hours.

As shown under 1.1, part-time work has increased considerably over the past five years. Female employees still represent the greatest share of part-time workers. As the EU Labour Force Survey shows, 4.6% of all employees were male employees who worked part time in 2000. This compares to a figure of 38.4% for female part-time workers in the same year. In 2006, the male as well as the female percentages had risen to 8.7% and 45.4% respectively.

The IAB study mentioned in section 2.1 shows that patterns of part-time work vary greatly between eastern and western Germany as well as between male and female part-time employees. The study indicates that 47.7 % of female employees in western Germany worked part-time in 2000 (51.1% in 2004). The same is, however, true for only 33.4% of all female employees in eastern Germany in 2000 (38.1% in 2004).

The percentage of male employees who worked part time also increased over the same period. In 2000, 10.9% of eastern German male employees worked on a part-time basis; this compared to a figure of 17.5% in 2004. In western Germany, 11.1% of male employees worked part time in 2000 compared to 14.9% in 2004.

Apart from the lower participation rate of women in part-time work in eastern Germany, the IAB study shows that female employees who work part-time in eastern Germany tend to work nearly two thirds the hours of

a full-time employee. Western German female employees, on the other hand, work half the hours of a full-time employee, or even less.

In this context, the author points to complementary research results from the Federal Statistical Office (Statistisches Bundesamt, Destatis). Destatis indicated that 54% of eastern German employees held a part-time position in 2005 due to the fact that they did not succeed in taking up a full-time position compared to only 11% in western Germany. In western Germany, women, in particular, cited family obligations or personal matters as their reason for working part time (63%).

## 1.5 Collective bargaining

Generally speaking, part-time work is not one of the major areas of collective bargaining. However, certain collective agreements provide clauses on part-time work, e.g. a minimum of four hours per day were negotiated for part-time workers in the chemical industry.

With regard to working time, the Confederation of German Trade Unions (Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund, DGB) states that, due to a high rate of unemployment as well as weak domestic economic activity, average working time should not be extended. DGB advocates a 35-hour working week for all employees. The main fears amongst unions are that longer working hours would effectively lead to cuts in pay (bonuses etc.) and would affect employees' work-life balance and their health adversely.

The collective-bargaining round in the metal and electrical industry in 2004 might serve as one example for fights over working-time issues between the social partners. At that time, the 35-hour working week was at stake. Another example is the United Services Union's (Vereinte Dienstleistungsgewerkschaft, ver.di) campaign against the prolonging of shop opening hours in 2006.

## 2 Work schedules

### 2.1 The working day and working week

The Fourth European Working Conditions Survey shows that 73.1% of all employees surveyed worked five days per week. Furthermore, 40.9% of the employees indicated that they worked between 39 and 41 hours a week. This was the largest group and was followed by those employees who worked 35 to 38 hours per week. This group comprised 21.2% of all employees. The number of hours worked per day differed for 42.6% of

the surveyed persons. However, the majority of employees work the same number of days every week (74.3%).

A study by the Institute of Economic and Social Research (Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaftliches Institut, WSI) shows that work schedules may differ greatly between the various economic sectors. The study analysed collectively agreed regulations concerning working-time arrangements in 24 industrial sectors. It should be noted that the study, and, therefore, the following information in this section, refers to collective agreements that had come into effect by December 2004.

With regard to the working week, most collective agreements stipulated a five-day working week lasting from Monday to Friday; this was, for instance, true in the chemical, metalworking, construction industries as well as in the financial services sector.

Collective agreements in other sectors deviated from these standards, e.g. five-day week in the retail industry that lasts from Monday to Saturday. Provisions for the postal sector held that one day of rest has to be granted to an employee within a seven-day period. Moreover, the majority of collective agreements contained provisions that allow for exceptions to the rule under certain circumstances.

Even if no detailed provision on the spread of regular working time is provided, most collective agreements stipulate an upper and/or lower limit on regular working time. The collective agreement applied to the agricultural sector in Bavaria sets out a lower limit of 37 hours per week and an upper limit of 43 hours per week. Bavarian hotels and restaurants were allowed to shorten or lengthen the working week from 32 to 45 hours. An upper limit of 45 hours per week was agreed upon by the social partners in the clothing industry and the financial services industry (60 hours in public services). These variations were mostly agreed in order to meet cyclical or seasonal fluctuations. Due to these limits, the working day or working week can differ. In this context, collective agreements set a period in which irregular working hours are acceptable as long as the average of the allowed total, e.g. monthly or annual, working time is not breached (*Ausgleichszeitraum*).

## 2.2 Non-standard work arrangements

Data from the Fourth European Working Conditions survey shows that 60% of all persons interviewed did not generally work in the evenings. However, 24.2% indicated that they worked more than 5 evenings per month and another 15.8% worked fewer than five evenings a month.

Nearly half of the surveyed persons (47.9%) stated that they did not work on Saturdays at all. Another 36.9% and 15.2% respectively said that they worked one to three Saturdays or even all Saturdays within a month. Sundays are usually rest days in Germany. It is, therefore, not surprising that a high proportion of the surveyed persons did not work on Sundays (81.8%).

For sectoral differences in working-time arrangements please see previous question.

### 2.3 Shift working

The analysis “Live and Work in Germany” conducted by Destatis shows that, from January to March 2004, 17.3 million employees (49% of all employees) worked non-standard hours, i.e. at the weekend, at night or on shifts. The study indicates that 11.9% of all employees conducted regular shift work within the period mentioned. This ratio has declined slightly from the 1991 figure of 13% (Micro census survey covering the period from February to April 1991).

The Fourth European Working Conditions Survey shows a slightly higher ratio for shift work, i.e. 15.7% of surveyed persons indicated that they worked shifts. Out of these, the majority (70.1%) worked rotating shifts and only 24.8% were on permanent shifts.

## 3 Organisation of working time

For 2004, data from the EU Labour Force Survey clearly indicate that only a minority of individual workers determined their own work schedule. More specifically, only 1.8% of all female and 2.4% of all male employees' work schedules can be considered to be completely self-determined. The dataset, furthermore, shows that 50.5% of female employees as well as 45.3% of male employees' working days commenced and ended at fixed hours. The ratios for employees who could commence and end their working days at variable times were much lower (women: 4.9%, men: 4.7%).

However, a greater proportion of employees were covered by schemes that enable them to bank working hours or even days. That means that 18.7% of male employees banked working hours (working days: 21.3%) in 2004. In comparison, 18% or 17.5% of the female employees banked working hours or working days in the same year.

However, employees can only use flexible working-time arrangements if their company or establishment offer such schemes. In this context, it should be noted that the implementation of flexible working-time arrangements varies greatly between different industries as a survey by the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (Deutscher Industrie- und Handelskammertag, DIHK) shows. The survey focused on flexible working-time arrangements in companies in 2004. More than 20,000 companies responded.

Nearly two thirds of the surveyed companies indicated that they had flexible working-time arrangements. About 40% of all companies provided flexible weekly working hours; this meant that flexible weekly working hours were the most popular instrument. Latter instrument had above-average ratios in the insurance sector (50%), the hotel and restaurant industry (47%) as well as the retail industry (43%).

The survey results prove that flextime combining “core hours” with variable hours to commence and end the working day was the second most popular form of flexible working-time arrangements amongst the surveyed companies, i.e. 33% of the companies used flextime. Companies in the printing industry as well as in electrical engineering represented above-average ratios (over 75%). Below-average ratios in the use of flextime can be found in the retail sector (19%) and the construction industry (9%).

The construction industry, however, was characterised by an increase in the prevalence of “annual working-time accounts” (*Jahresarbeitszeitkonten*) in which an individual’s working hours are booked over the year. This option was used by 53% of all surveyed companies in the construction industry. The authors of the survey contend that the industry prefers such flexible working-time arrangements because demand is highly seasonal.

## **4 Other working time issues**

### **4.1 Multiple job holding**

The Fourth European Working Conditions Survey shows that 2% of the surveyed persons performed a second job on a regular basis. Similarly, the results of the 2003 micro census indicate that holding a second job is not very widespread in Germany. An analysis of the 2003 micro census data indicates that nearly a quarter of all employees holding a second job



worked in retail, in the hotel and restaurant or the transport sector (24%). Another 53% were subsumed under the category 'other service activities'. The majority of those with a second job (78%) worked 15 or fewer hours in that position. The analysis, therefore, assumes that second jobs are mainly conducted to supplement the income derived from the first job.

## 4.2 Commuting time

The Fourth European Working Conditions Survey reveals that, on average, 45 minutes per day are spent by the surveyed persons commuting to and from work. The 2004 micro census provides more detailed insights into commuting (time).

In March 2004, out of 35.7 million employees, 30.3 million indicated that they have to commute. Amongst them, 77% used 30 minutes or less to travel to work. Another 18% of commuters used 30 minutes to one hour. Only 5% of all commuters needed an hour or more to go to work.

It should be noted that 55% of commuters travelled within their municipality or local community to go to work. These commuters mostly lived in larger urban areas. Inhabitants of smaller communities had to leave their place of residence more often.

## 4.3 Unpaid working hours (of those in work)

The Fourth European Working Conditions Survey shows that women tend to do much more unpaid work (18.7 hours per week) than their male counterparts (4.7 hours per week). The lion's share of the unpaid work done by women is taken up by housework (12.7 hours per week). Caring for children is also an important unpaid task (6.9 hours per week). Time devoted to caring for an elderly or disabled relative also accounts for some of the unpaid work performed by women (0.8 hours per week).

The topic of unpaid work does not represent a great public issue in itself. However, the Federal Ministry of Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend, BMFSFJ) has made great efforts to call for a family-friendly society. They suggest a variety of initiatives that seek to develop or support a better work-life balance.

To unburden families, issues such as the provision of nursing-home care for the elderly, the availability of kindergartens or a fairer share of household chores between the sexes as well as parental leaves are back

on the political agenda. The public debate is characterised by an emphasis on these latter issues; they are, however, only indirectly linked to the matter of unpaid work.

#### 4.4 Composite indicators of weekly working hours

Concerning composite indicators, one should note that averages on female and male working hours might be misleading. The presented data from the Fourth European Working Conditions Survey differ to a certain extent from the representative data from the German micro census. Destatis conducted a representative sample survey in 2001/2002. Around 12,000 persons above ten years old in 5,400 households were surveyed on matters of time and time distribution.

Women in the survey spent on average 12 hours per week in paid work compared to nearly 31 hours of unpaid work per week. The majority of these women, 63%, indicated that a great share of unpaid work was devoted to housework or to gardening (2.75 hours per day).

The surveyed men, on the other hand, worked a weekly average of 22.5 hours of paid work plus another 19.5 hours of unpaid work. Male unpaid work is also mainly devoted to housework or to the family (1.25 hours per day).

Though female employment has increased over the past few years, this development has mainly been characterised by female part-time employment (especially in western Germany). Therefore, it should be considered that composite indicators on weekly working hours for female part-time employees are represented separately (best of all with the distinction between eastern and western German employees). One might assume that female part-time employees spent more time on domestic chores doing unpaid hours without necessarily working longer hours than their husbands engaged in full-time (paid) work. Furthermore, the presented composite indicators do not illuminate the distribution of weekly working hours of family members within one household – most of all between parents.

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# **Final questionnaire on working time in the European Union**

## **Abstract**

The aim is to obtain a fuller insight into differences in working time across the European Union and into developments in average hours worked both in total and by specific sections of the work force in different Member States over recent years. The concern is to investigate the factors underlying the changes that are observed in the survey data collected and, in particular, how terms and conditions of employment are changing in relation to working time. In general, data refers to the working time of those in employment.

## **Questionnaire**

In completing the questionnaire, correspondents should refer to the data in the tables sent with it. These come from, first, the EU Labour Force Survey and cover average hours worked by men and women employees both overall and in part-time and full-time jobs, the proportion of men and women in part-time jobs and the relative number of men and women employed under different arrangements as regards working time. Secondly, they come from the Fourth European Working Conditions Survey conducted by the European Foundation and cover other aspects of working time, including the number of days worked per week, evening, night and weekend working, the organisation of working time, the proportion of people with second jobs, the time spent commuting as well as on unpaid work.

These data are intended to form the basis of the replies to the questions asked but correspondents are encouraged to identify and use other sources of relevant data where available to supplement these.

## **1 Duration of work**

### **1.1 Average weekly hours**

Does the evidence from the above surveys, and other sources, indicate that, over the past five or ten years, employees are working fewer hours in your country?

Is there evidence that any such decline in average working time is due more to compositional changes (e.g. more women entering the labour market and working part-time) than to an across-the-board reduction in hours?

Is there evidence that any fall in average hours over these periods may be due to a reduction in the number of people working very long hours – over 48 per week? Is there evidence that this has been due, to any extent, to the adoption of the EU working time Directive?

## 1.2 Annual hours worked

To what extent is the notion of annual working time (calculated to take account of annual holidays, including public holidays, as well as average weekly hours) in common use in political or everyday discussion, or in social partner negotiations?

Is there any evidence that the number of weeks worked per year has declined over the past five or ten years due to increased holidays, or time off for other purposes?

## 1.3 Days of work per week

Is the five-day week the predominant norm, as opposed to other patterns – four days, four and a half-days, five and a half-days, six days?

Are there any obvious trends in this respect – for example, to reduce the number of days worked per week, but to increase the number of hours worked each day?

## 1.4 Full-time and part-time working

Has part-time working grown relative to full-time working over the past five or ten years?

Are there major gender differences in the patterns of part-time working?

Does the government encourage part-time working, either 'passively' (i.e. through the workings of social security or taxation rules) or 'actively' (e.g. in the sense of particular incentives being offered)?

## 1.5 Collective bargaining

What are the main working time concerns and priorities of trade unions in collective bargaining?

Is part-time working generally viewed positively, or accepted reluctantly, by trade unions?

# 2 Work schedules

## 2.1 The working day and working week

To what extent does the standard 'full-time' working day – 08.00/09.00 to 17.00/18.00 - prevail as the norm?

To what extent does the 'standard time norm' of the working week (40 hour, 5 day week) prevail?

## 2.2 Non-standard work arrangements

To what extent are non-standard working time arrangements – evening, night and week-end work - mainly limited to those sectors of the economy where it is difficult to

avoid – e.g. shift working in continuous process plants or lunch-time and evening work in restaurants?

Is there a tendency for non-standard schedules to enter into other areas of the economy, where it may not be strictly necessary, but where it may have attractions – for employers wishing to make more intensive use of their plant, equipment and other facilities, and for workers wishing to attain a better work-life balance or a more convenient means of taking care of children?

To what extent are weekend working and other non-standard working arrangements the result of seasonal work (such as in tourism)?

### 2.3 Shift working

How important is regular shift working (as opposed to occasional shifts to cope with increased temporary demand) in your country?

Is shift-working predominantly carried out in specific sectors, and is there any tendency for it to decline (for example as a result of reducing capacity in traditional sectors) or to increase (as employers everywhere seek to make more intensive use of capital investments)?

What kinds of shift systems dominate – regular mornings, afternoon or nights or mixed patterns?

## 3 Organisation of working time

How far do individual workers have influence over their own working time arrangements – for example over the time they start and end work?

To what extent is it possible to ‘bank’ hours or days of work – for example to work extra hours for a number of days in order to take day(s) off?

To what extent can workers determine their own work schedules - in other words, work when they like, so long as the work is delivered on time?

From an employee perspective, can a distinction be drawn between ‘positive’ flexibility concerning working time (i.e. arrangements that suit them) and ‘negative’ flexibility (arrangements that suit their employers), or are most arrangements by mutual consent?

Is there evidence that people with higher ranking, better paid jobs are more likely to have greater flexibility regarding their working time arrangements than those with lower ranking/less well paid jobs?

Are there major differences between non-manual workers and manual workers in terms of such flexibility?

Are there major differences between public sector and private sector workers in terms of such flexibility?

Are any major gender differences – for example, are men and women seen to be subject to more or less ‘positive’ or ‘negative’ flexibility?

#### **4 Other working time issues**

##### **4.1 Multiple job holding**

How widespread is the practice of multiple job holding in your country?

Are second or third jobs primarily seen as supplementary sources of income relative to a main job, or are all the different jobs seen as equally valid?

##### **4.2 Commuting time**

How much time does commuting typically add to the average ‘working day’ (in the sense of time spent away from home)?

Is commuting commonplace for everybody, or does the time spent vary in any systematic way – such as according to the type of job, or whether people live in urban or rural areas?

Is the development of teleworking (full-time or part-time) seen as a viable and attractive alternative to commuting?

##### **4.3 Unpaid working hours (of those in work)**

Is there much debate about the impact of time spent on unpaid work in the home, as well as time spent on paid work, on work-life balance, especially between men and women?

Are there pressures for non-paid work to be more recognised, and for the work involved to be shared more evenly between partners?

##### **4.4 Composite indicators of weekly working hours**

Composite indicators of weekly working hours have been developed for full-time and part-time workers, both male and female, which include time spent in unpaid as well as paid work and time spent commuting. What do you see as the most significant implications of these indicators so far as your country is concerned?