



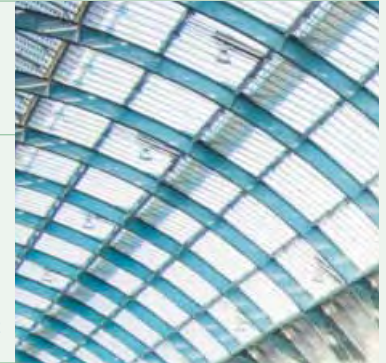
European Foundation for the
Improvement of Living and
Working Conditions



Transport and storage sector: Working conditions and job quality

'Work plays a significant role in people's lives, in the functioning of companies and in society at large. But what is work? How can we describe it? Is it changing, and if so, is it for better or for worse? Is it fulfilling the numerous and at times conflicting expectations we have of it? How can we take steps to improve work for the well-being of all?'

Eurofound, *Fifth European Working Conditions Survey: Overview report, 2012*



This report gives an overview of working conditions, job quality, workers' health and job sustainability in the transport and storage sector (NACE 49 to 53).¹ It is based mostly on the fifth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), which gathers data on working conditions and the quality of work across 34 European countries. Additional information on the structural characteristics of the sector is derived from Eurostat data. The sector covers land, water and air transport plus warehousing and support activities for transportation and courier activities. The fifth EWCS contains responses from 1,882 workers in this sector. This report compares aspects of work in the sector with the EU28 as a whole.

Structural characteristics

In 2010, some 11,081,000 European workers worked in the transport and storage sector, 5.1% of the EU28 workforce (Eurostat, 2013). Employment in the sector dramatically decreased (-4.4%) between 2008 and 2010, and declined further (-0.4%) between 2010 and 2012.

Countries where the transport and storage sector is a relatively large employer are Latvia (8.9%), Estonia (7.7%), Lithuania (7.0%) and Hungary (6.8%). The sector has relatively little prominence in Portugal (3.6%), Cyprus (4.1%), Luxembourg (4.2%) and Denmark (4.7%) (Eurostat, 2013). A large proportion of workers in transport and storage (55%) work in small and medium-sized workplaces (SMEs; 10–249

employees), compared to 46% of workers in the EU28. The percentage of workers in transport and storage in micro-workplaces (1–9 employees) accounts for 28% of the workforce, while in the EU28 the proportion is 42%. Large workplaces (250+ employees) also account for a large proportion of workers in this sector (17%), and a larger percentage than in the EU28 (12%).

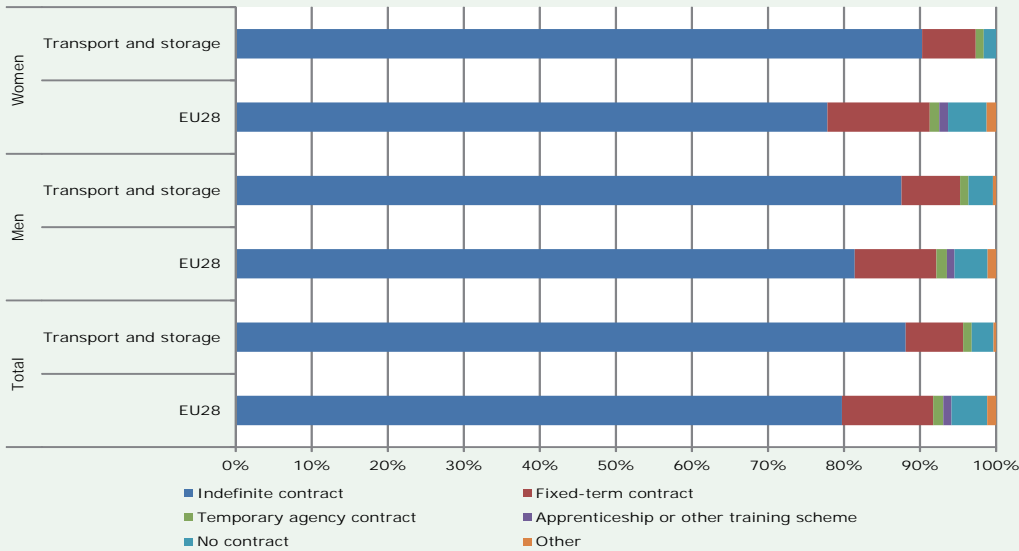
The sector is male-dominated, with 78% of the workers in transport and storage being men. It employs a relatively large proportion of middle-aged people. Only 6% of workers in the sector are under 25, compared to 9% in the EU28. Those in the 40–49 age bracket account for 31% of the workers in the sector, compared with 27% in the EU28 (Eurostat, 2013). Self-employment is relatively uncommon in transport and storage, with 3% being self-employed with employees and 8% self-employed without employees, compared to 4% and 11% respectively in the EU28. Fixed-term and apprenticeship contracts are less prevalent in transport and storage than in the

Transport and storage in a nutshell

- The sector is strongly male-dominated
- Decreases in salaries and hours worked have affected this sector more than the EU28 average
- Male workers report high levels of atypical working hours and low regularity
- Work–life balance is reportedly worse in the sector than in the EU28
- Employee representation is more prevalent in this sector than in the EU28
- Job strain (high work intensity and low job autonomy) is an issue for the majority of workers

¹ Nomenclature statistique des activités économiques dans la Communauté européenne (statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community).

Figure 1: Employment status, by gender



EU28 as a whole. Contrary to the EU28 trend, fixed-term contracts in transport and storage are not more prevalent among women than among men (Figure 1). It is also interesting to note that indefinite contracts are more common in this sector than in the EU28 as a whole. The difference in the incidence of indefinite contracts is particularly great among women.

Part-time work is much less prevalent in the transport and storage sector (11.3%) than in the EU28 (24.3%).

Working conditions

Changes since the crisis

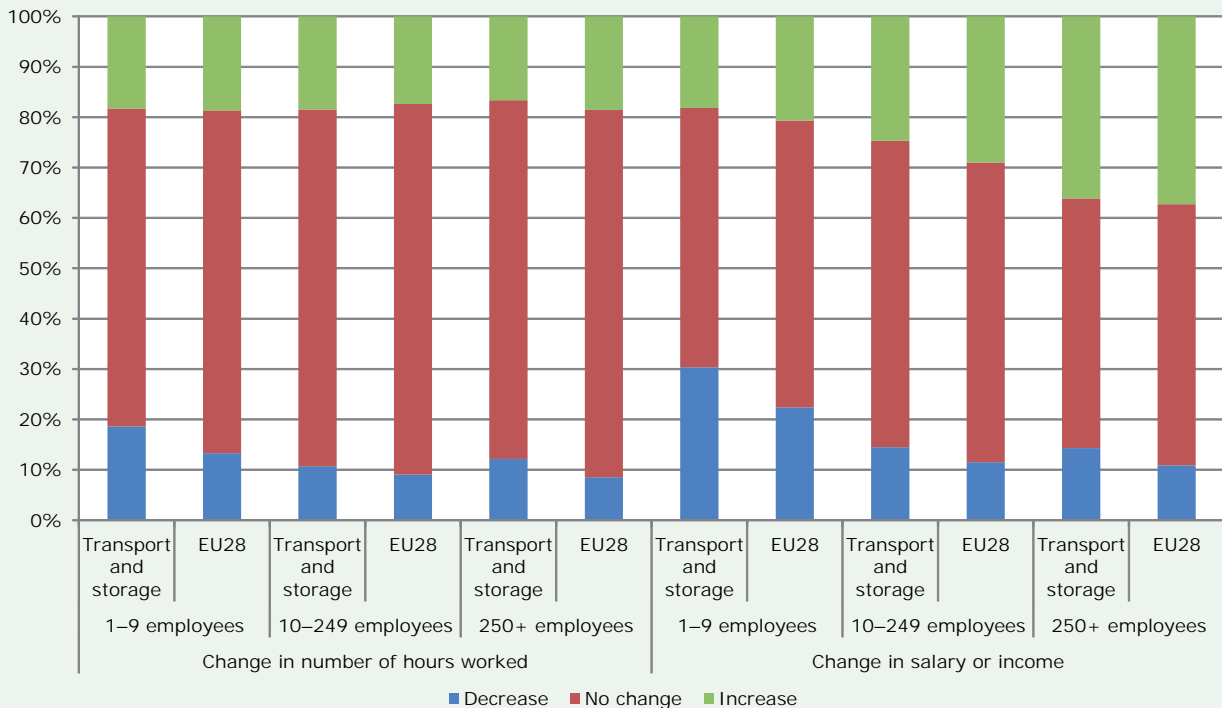
Figure 2 shows that reductions in hours worked have been more common in the transport and storage sector than in the EU28 as a whole, and at the same

time increases in hours have been as frequent in this sector as in the EU28.

A similar trend is observed when looking at change in income, with transport and storage reporting a higher percentage of decreases in salaries and a lower percentage of increases in salaries than the EU28 as a whole. Workers in micro-workplaces were the most affected by both working hours and salary reductions.

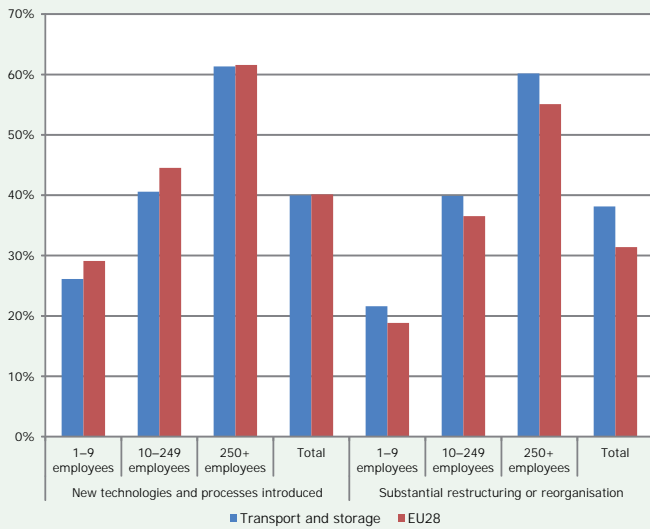
Considering restructuring and the introduction of new technologies in the three years prior to the survey, workers in transport and storage were equally affected as the EU28 average (Figure 3). The transport and storage sector follows the same pattern as the EU28, since the proportion of employees

Figure 2: Percentage of employees reporting changes in number of hours worked and salary or income in past year, by workplace size



reporting restructuring or reorganisation, or the introduction of new production processes and technologies increases with workplace size.

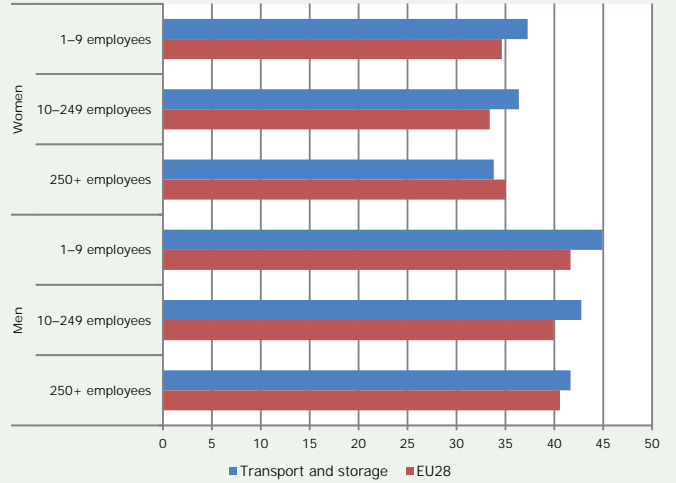
Figure 3: Restructuring and introduction of new technologies in past three years, by workplace size



Working time and work-life balance

Workers in transport and storage on average work 42 hours per week compared to 38 hours in the EU28. Only women workers in large workplaces report working slightly fewer hours than their peers in the EU28.

Figure 4: Average working hours, by gender and workplace size



When comparing transport and storage with the EU28 average for working time preferences, the main differences have to do with gender (Figure 5). Men in the sector have a stronger preference for working fewer hours than the EU28 average. The exception is for workers in large workplaces who are more likely to say they are happy with their current working hours than other workplace sizes. Women in the transport and storage sector also report higher satisfaction with their present number of hours than the average EU28 female worker. This trend holds for all workplace sizes but is especially pronounced for large workplaces.

Figure 5: Working time preferences, by gender and workplace size

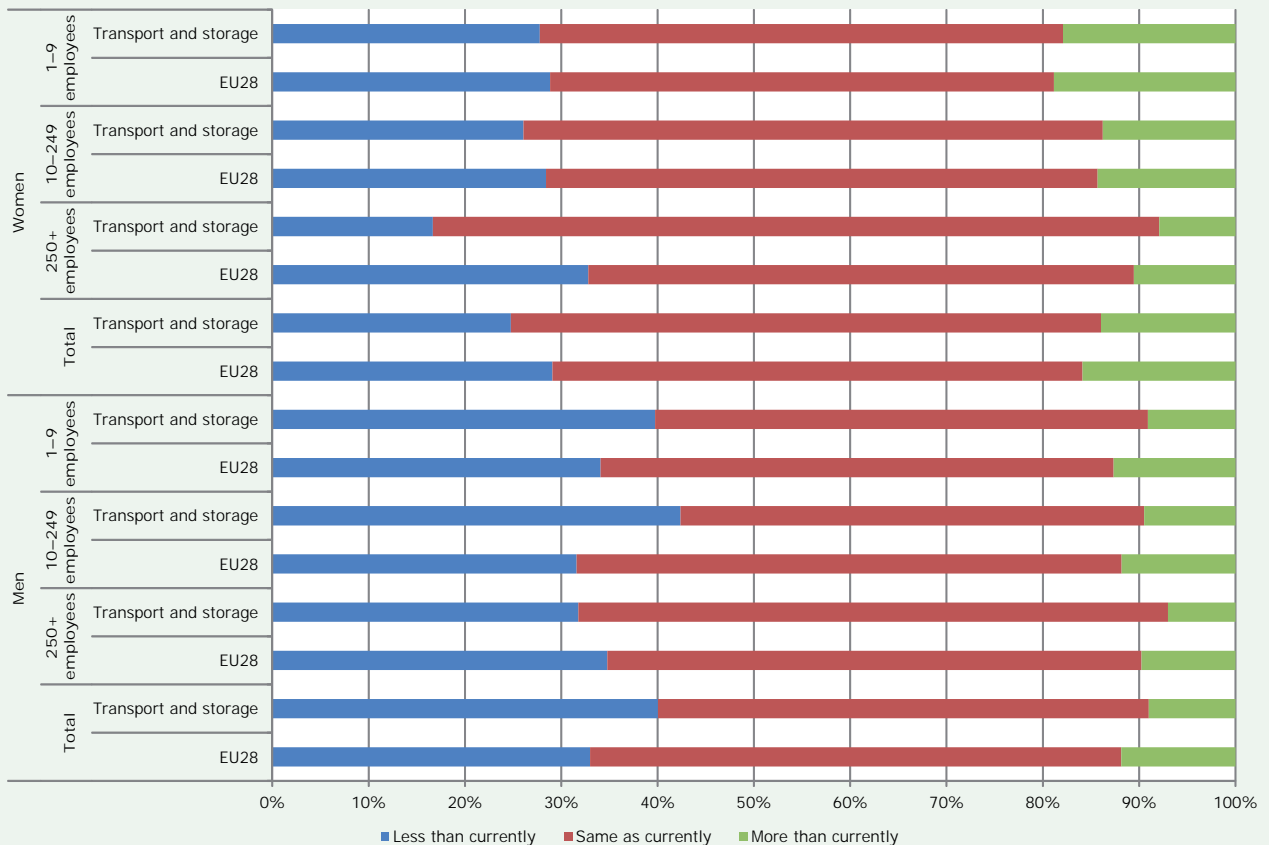
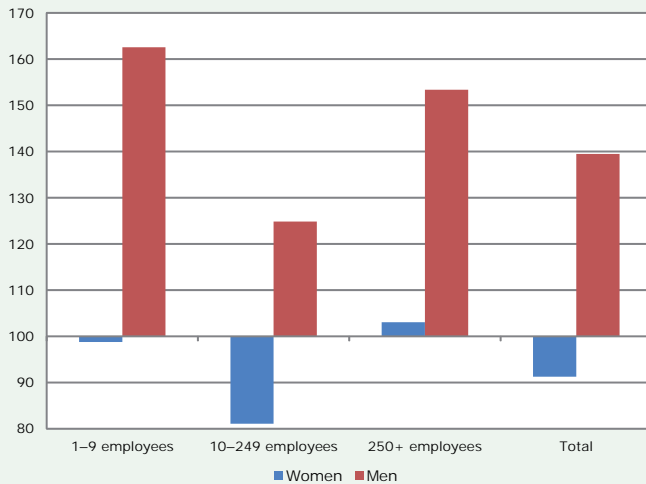


Figure 6 shows that working atypical hours (weekends, evenings or nights) also follows a gender pattern. Men in the transport and storage sector tend to work a much larger number of atypical hours than the average male worker in the EU28. Their female counterparts, however, tend to work slightly fewer atypical hours than the average EU28 female worker. The data show that in SMEs both men and women in the sector tend to work fewer atypical hours than in micro- and large workplaces.

Figure 6: Index of working atypical hours (EU28=100), by gender and workplace size



When looking at the regularity of working time, gender differences are again observed (Figure 7). Men tend to report less regular working times than their peers in the EU28, and this trend is especially pronounced for micro-workplaces. Women in the sector report more regular working times than in the EU28.

Figure 7: Index of working atypical hours (EU28=100), by gender and workplace size

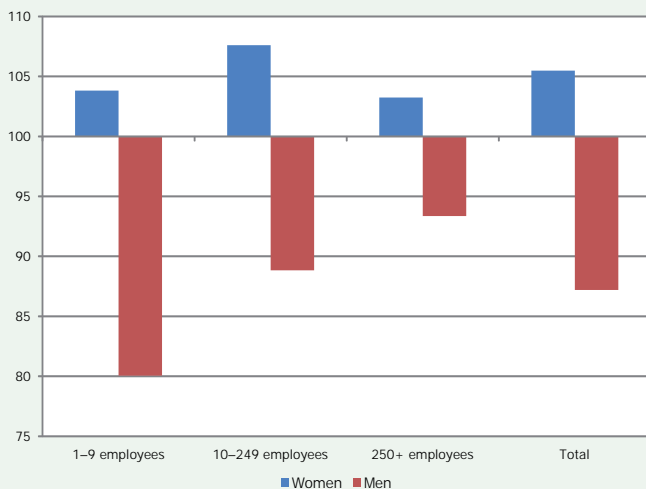
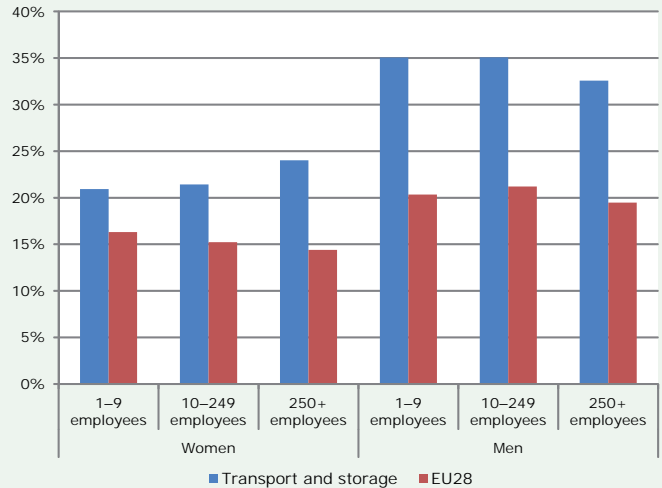


Figure 8 shows that work–life balance (the fit between working hours and family or social commitments) is worse for those working in the transport and storage sector than in the EU28 as a whole. Men in the sector also report having a poor work–life balance much more frequently than women.

Figure 8: Poor work–life balance, by gender and workplace size

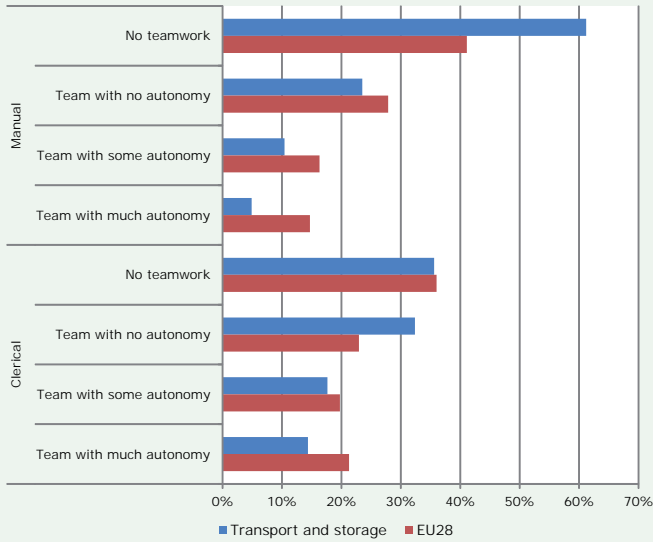


Work organisation

Teamwork

Teamwork has been proposed as an alternative to work organisation models based on high levels of labour division. As teamwork reflects a variety of practices, it can also assume a variety of forms. Different types of teamwork can be identified using the EWCS by looking at the level of autonomy within the teams. For manual workers, teamwork is less prevalent in transport and storage (39%) than in the EU28 (59%). This difference, however, disappears for clerical workers. The proportion of workers working in teams with autonomy is smaller for both manual and clerical workers in the sector than for their peers in the EU28. As an example, only 5% of the manual workers in transport and storage report working in a team with much autonomy, compared with 15% for this group in the EU28 (Figure 9).

Figure 9: Teamwork and team autonomy, by occupational category



Task rotation

Task rotation is also an important feature of work organisation. Depending on how it is implemented, task rotation may require different skills from the worker ('multiskilling') or may not ('fixed task rotation') and is either controlled by management or by the workers themselves ('autonomous'). Task rotation has been shown to be beneficial for workers' well-being, and autonomous multiskilling systems in particular are associated with higher worker motivation as well as better company performance.

Among those workers reporting task rotation, a large proportion in transport and storage are in management-controlled fixed task rotation compared with the EU28. Therefore, the proportion of workers in the sector reporting being in management-controlled multiskilling and autonomous multiskilling is lower than in the EU28 (Figure 10).

Female bosses

The sector is male-dominated and the proportion of workers reporting having a female boss (11%) is lower in the sector than in the EU28 (28%). Men in the transport and storage sector report a particularly low proportion of female bosses (6%). The proportion of female workers in the sector with a female boss (30%) actually exceeds the proportion of women working in the sector (22%).

Skills and training

Overall, the majority of workers in transport and storage say that their present skills correspond well with their duties (Figure 11). The proportion of people reporting being 'over-skilled' is similar to that in the EU28, and the proportion of workers in the sector reporting being 'under-skilled' is slightly below the EU28 average.

Figure 10: Prevalence of task rotation, by workplace size

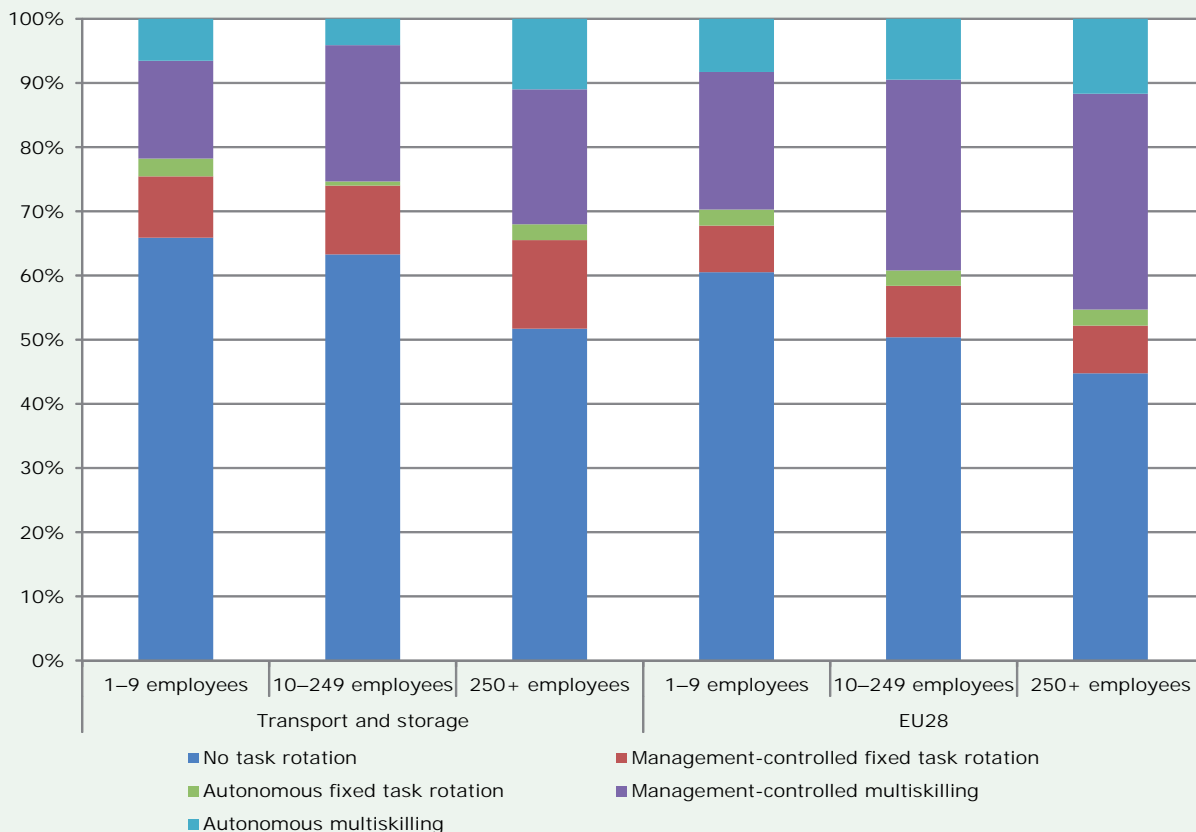
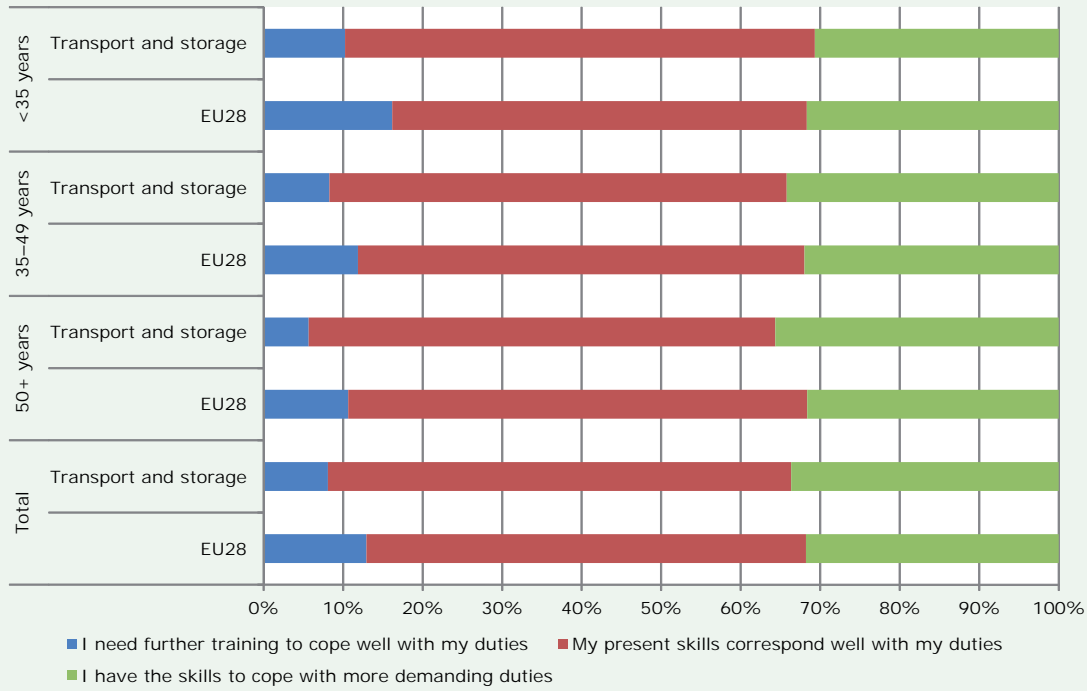
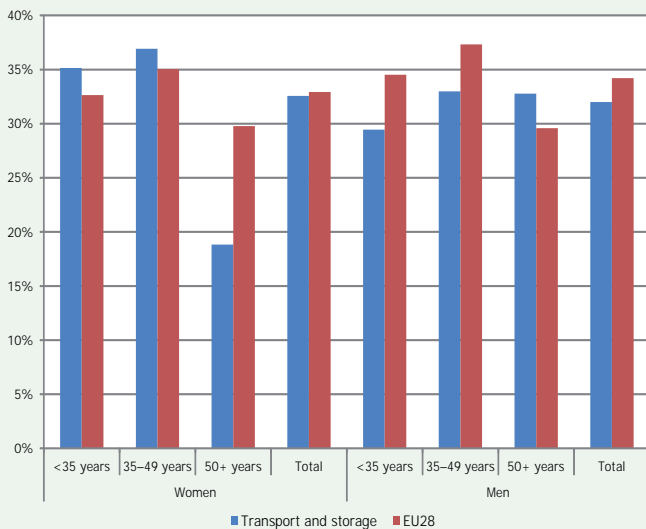


Figure 11: Match between skills and tasks, by age



The proportion of workers in transport and storage who report having received training in the last 12 months does not differ much from that in the EU28 (Figure 12). The exceptions are female workers aged 50 or above working in the sector, a smaller percentage of whom report having received training than similar workers in the EU28. Young male workers in transport and storage also report having received less training than their EU28 peers.

Figure 12: Employer-paid training, by gender and age

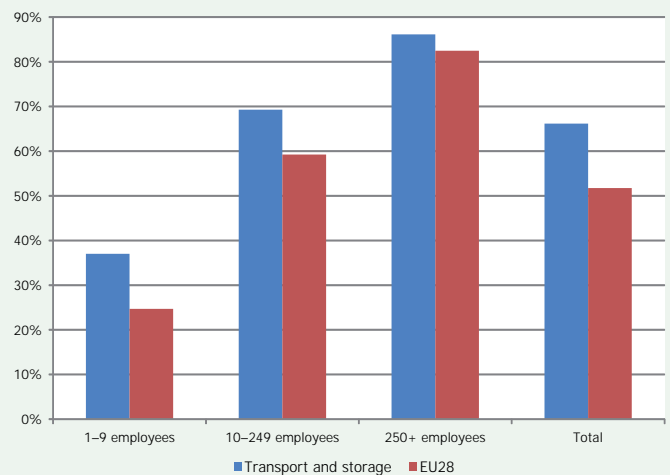


Employee representation

The EWCS contains fairly limited information on formal employee representation. It asks whether an employee representative is present at the workplace and whether workers have raised an issue with an employee representative in the past year. Figure 13 shows the combined results of these questions (an

employee representative has been considered to be 'available' if they were present at the workplace or when an issue was raised). In 2010, 66% of employees in the transport and storage sector reported that an employee representative was available compared to 52% of workers in the EU28. Employee representation tends to be greater in transport and storage for all categories of workplace size, even if the difference is smaller for large workplaces.

Figure 13: Availability of an employee representative at the workplace, by workplace size

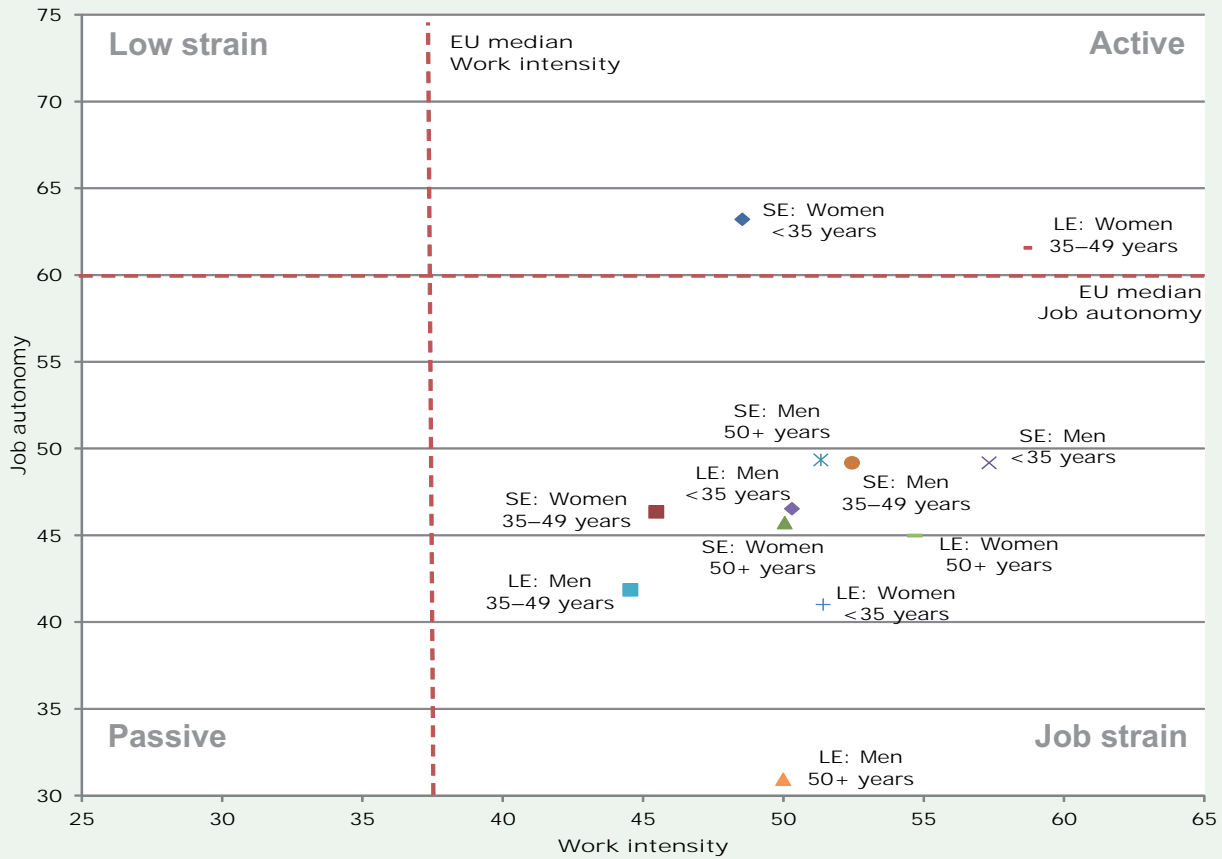


Psychosocial and physical environment

Job autonomy and work intensity

The psychosocial and physical environment impacts heavily on workers' well-being. According to the job demand and control model of the American sociologist Karasek (1979), workers are more likely to suffer from work-related stress when they are faced

Figure 14: Distribution of groups of workers by average levels of job autonomy and work intensity



Note: LE = large enterprise; SE = micro, small or medium-sized enterprise

with a high level of demand while being limited in the control they have over the way in which they carry out their job.

Figure 14 shows the likelihood of workers in the transport and storage sector suffering from work-related stress. Groups of workers are plotted along two axes: job autonomy and work intensity.

Most of the workers in transport and storage tend to fall into the bottom-right quadrant category of 'job strain'. This is the most problematic since the jobs of workers in this category are characterised by high levels of intensity and low levels of autonomy, posing the risk of unhealthy stress levels and consequently a range of stress-related illnesses such as cardiovascular disease and mental health problems.

The exceptions to this general sector trend seem to be women under 35 years old working in micro, small or medium-sized enterprises and women aged between 36 and 49 in large workplaces. These two groups have more autonomy than the rest of the workforce and so they fall into the upper right category of 'active' jobs. 'Active' jobs imply high levels of work intensity and high levels of job autonomy. Although their jobs can be very demanding, workers in these jobs have enough control over the way they do their job and can develop coping strategies through active learning.

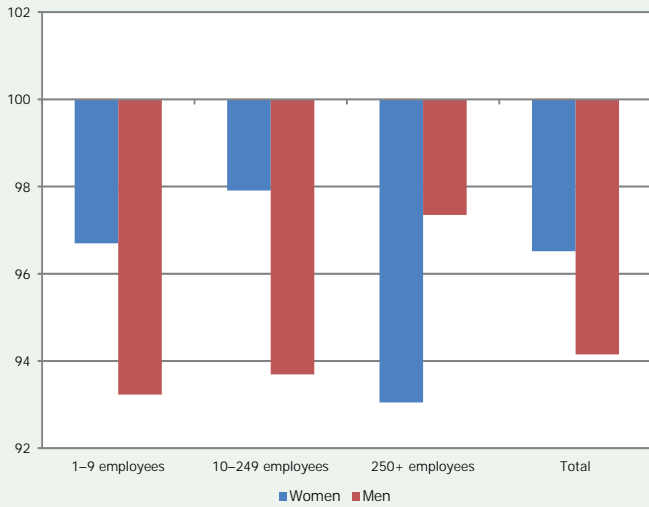
Both the bottom- and top-left quadrants are empty in Figure 14, indicating that no groups of workers in the transport and storage sector fall, on average, within these categories. Jobs in the bottom-left quadrant indicate 'passive' jobs, characterised by relatively low levels of intensity and relatively low levels of autonomy. These jobs are not sufficiently challenging and while workers are not at risk of work-related stress, they are potentially subject to frustration and low motivation. The top-left quadrant indicates 'low strain' jobs, characterised by relatively low levels of work intensity and relatively high levels of job autonomy. Workers in this category are usually at a low risk of stress, and are not as likely to suffer from frustration and loss of motivation as those in passive jobs. However, their jobs might not challenge them to realise their full potential. The fact that both these categories are empty for the sector clearly shows that the average levels of work intensity for all workers are above the EU28 median.

Social environment

A good social environment is characterised by the existence of social support and the absence of abuse at work. Social support can help workers deal with high levels of work intensity. Workers in transport and storage are, on average, slightly below the EU28 trend on this indicator (Figure 15). For all categories

except large workplaces, men in the sector report a worse social environment than women.

Figure 15: Index of good social environment (EU28=100), by gender and workplace size



Physical risks

The transport and storage sector shows a clear pattern of exposure to higher ambient risks, especially for manual workers, but excluding female clerical workers (Figure 16). Biological and chemical risks and posture- and movement-related risks are less prominent in the transport and storage sector than in the EU28 as a whole. Only men in manual jobs in the sector report slightly higher than average posture- and movement-related risks.

The percentage of workers in transport and storage reporting that they were not very well or not at all well informed about workplace risks is very close to that for the EU28 as a whole (Figure 17). This proportion increases with workplace size, the proportion in the sector being slightly higher for all workplace sizes when compared with the EU28.

Figure 17: Not very or not at all well informed about health and safety risks at work, by workplace size

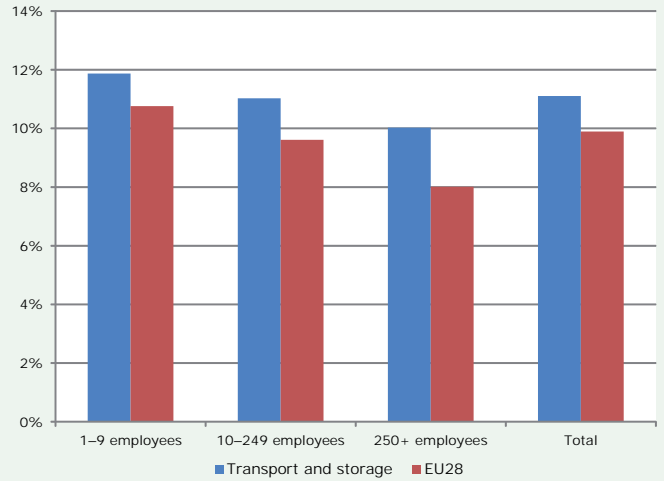


Figure 16: Indices of exposure to physical risks (EU28=100), by gender and occupational category

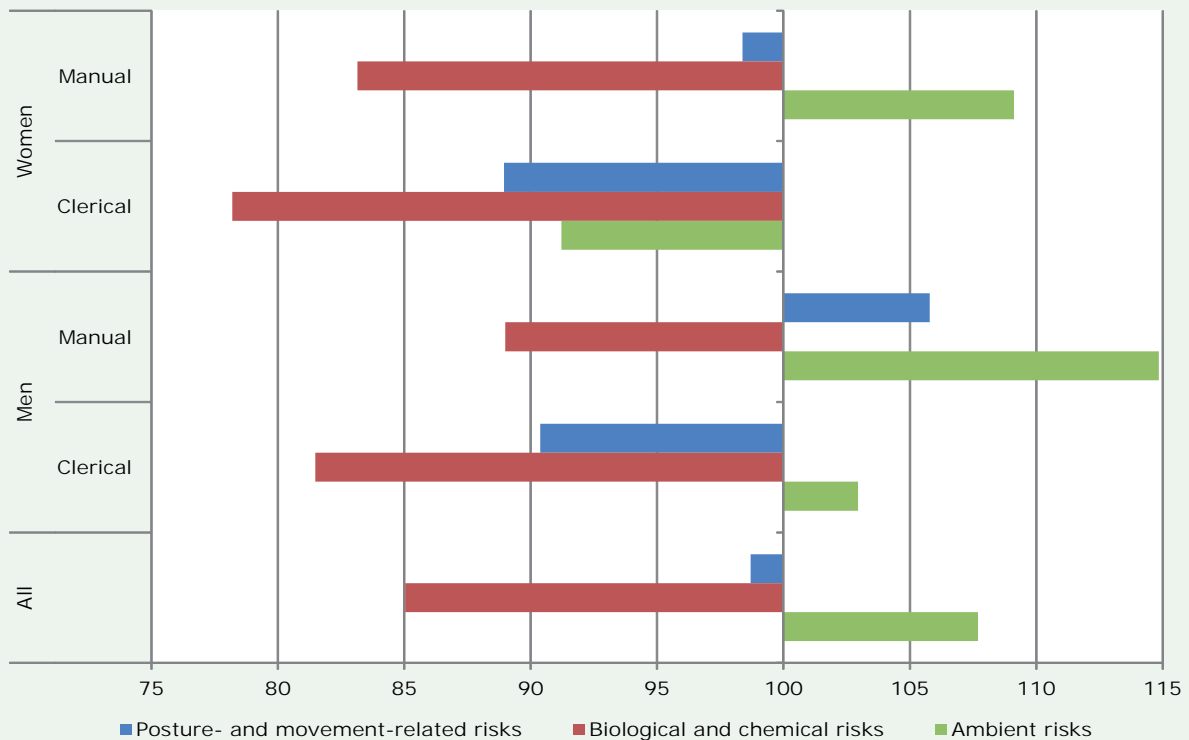
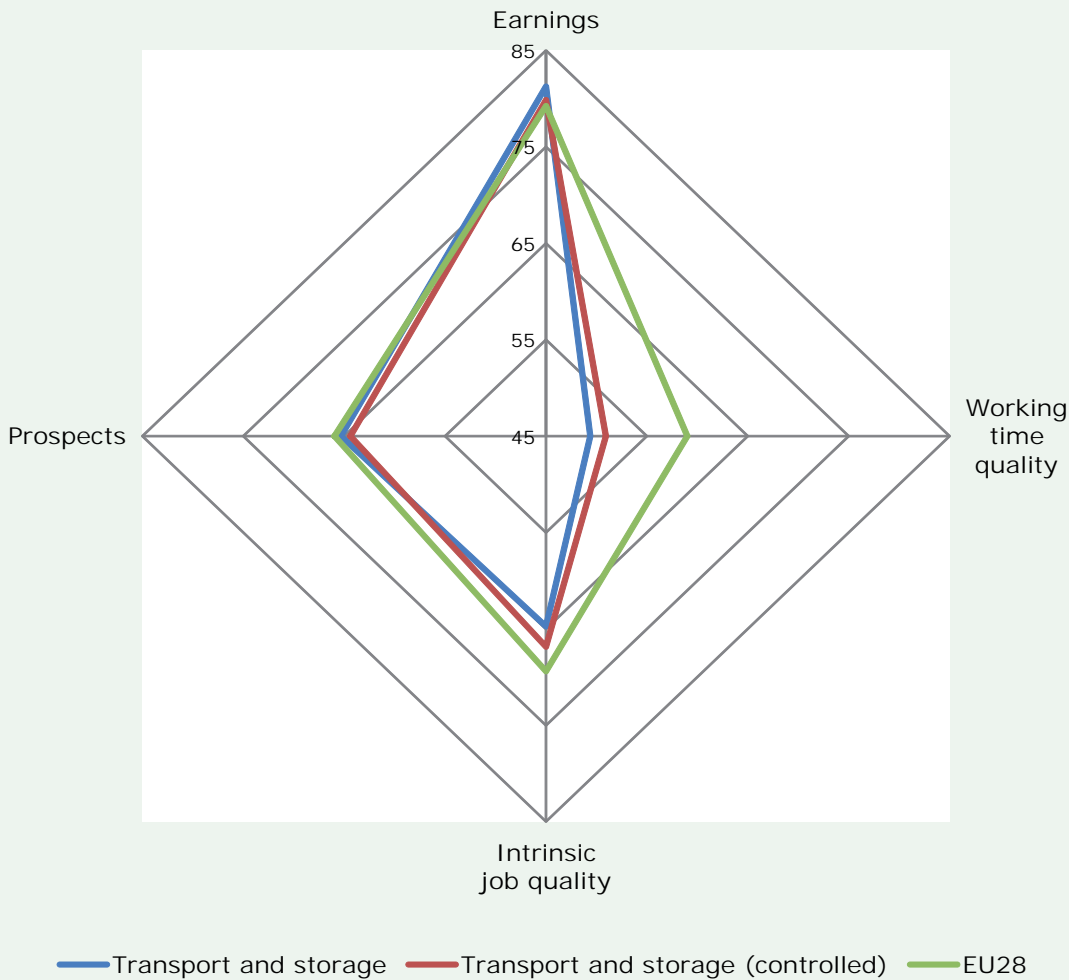


Figure 18: Job quality in the transport and storage sector compared with the EU28



Note: Scores on all four indicators range from 0 to 100

Job quality

In the report *Trends in job quality in Europe*, the authors constructed four indices of job quality: earnings, prospects, intrinsic job quality and working time quality. The indices are built using job characteristics that are unambiguously associated with workers' well-being.

Figure 18 summarises job quality in the transport and storage sector. It shows the average score for the sector on each of the indicators, with and without controlling for the structural characteristics of the sector's workers (age, gender, workplace size, education level and country), and for the EU28.

The indicators of earnings and prospects in the sector are close to the EU28 average. However, working time quality and intrinsic job quality in transport and storage rank lower than the EU28 average, with the indicator of working time quality being particularly low. When taking into account the structural characteristics of the sector, such as gender, age, country, education and workplace size, the gap between the sector and

the EU28 in these two indicators closes slightly, but there is still a statistically significant difference.

Health and sustainability of work

Working conditions have both a positive and negative impact on the health of workers and on the sustainability of their jobs.

Figure 19 shows that transport and storage compares negatively with the EU28 for all indicators except in relation to presenteeism (having worked when sick), where differences are not statistically significant. After controlling for structural variables such as gender, age, education, workplace size and the distribution of the workforce among countries, statistically significant differences are found in terms of higher health at risk due to work in the transport and storage sector, a higher incidence of poor self-reported health and a higher proportion of workers reporting that work affects their health negatively. Differences in the indicator of being able to work at 60 and absenteeism due to work accident disappear after taking into consideration the structural factors.

Figure 19: Health and sustainability of work

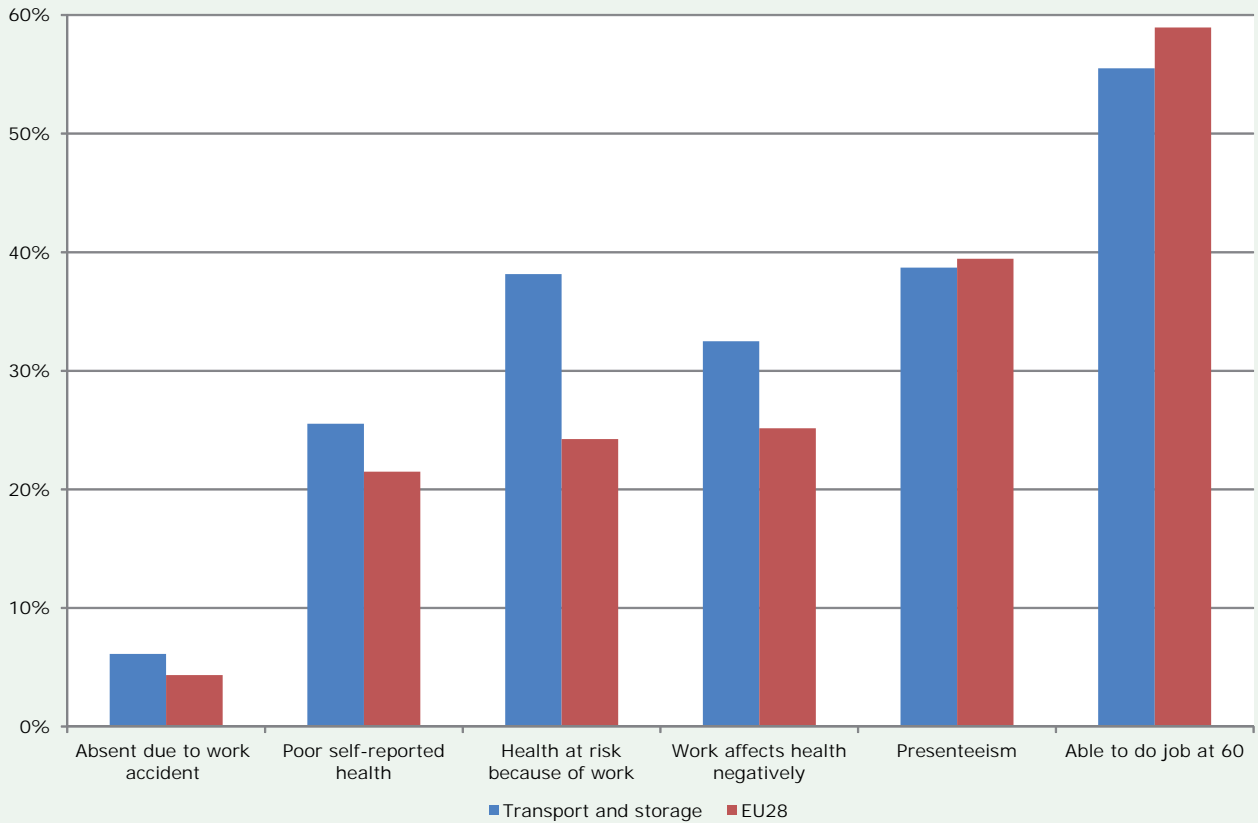
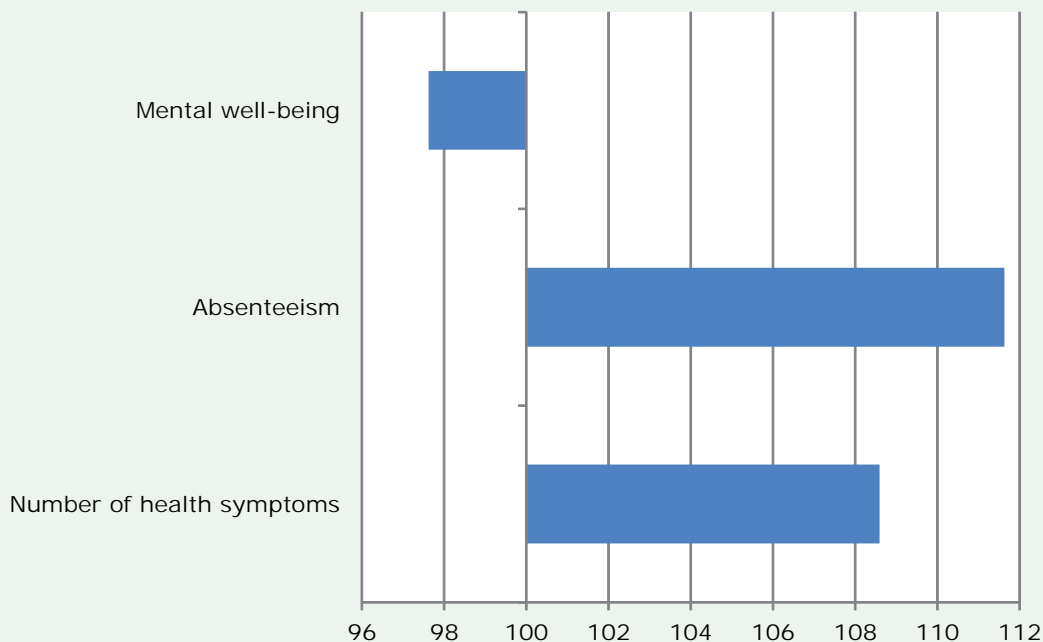


Figure 20 shows another negative picture of the transport and storage sector, with mental well-being scoring slightly below the EU28, while absenteeism and the number of health symptoms are higher than the EU28 average. However, when controlling for gender, age, education, workplace size and country, the difference in levels of absenteeism is no longer statistically significant.

It is important to keep in mind that the impact of work on health is a very gradual process that can take a long time and cannot be fully captured in a cross-sectional survey. The results in this section are likely to underestimate the often negative health effects that physically and psychologically strenuous working conditions can have.

Figure 20: Indices of health symptoms, mental well-being and absenteeism (EU28=100)



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European Working Conditions Survey

Eurofound developed its European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) in 1990 in order to provide high-quality information on living and working conditions in Europe. Five waves of the survey have been carried out to date, enabling long-term trends to be observed and analysed.

The EWCS interviews both employees and self-employed people on key issues related to their work and employment. Fieldwork for the fifth EWCS took place from January to June 2010, with almost 44,000 workers interviewed in their homes in 34 countries – EU28, Norway, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo. The 5th EWCS was implemented by Gallup Europe, who worked within a strong quality assurance framework to ensure the highest possible standards in all data collection and editing processes.

The questionnaire covered issues such as precarious employment, leadership styles and worker participation as well as the general job context, working time, work organisation, pay, work-related health risks, cognitive and psychosocial factors, work-life balance and access to training. A number of questions were included to capture the impact of the economic downturn on working conditions.

For more information on the EWCS, see <http://eurofound.europa.eu/european-working-conditions-surveys-ewcs>

Sectoral analysis

The report *Working conditions and job quality: Comparing sectors in Europe* and the series of 33 sectoral information sheets aim to capture the diversity prevalent across sectors in Europe in terms of working conditions and job quality. The report pinpoints trends across sectors in areas such as working time and work-life balance, work organisation, skills and training, employee representation and the psychosocial and physical environment. It identifies sectors that score particularly well or particularly poorly in terms of job quality and sheds light on differences between sectors in terms of health and well-being.

For more information, see <http://eurofound.europa.eu/comparing-working-conditions-across-sectors-in-europe>

Further information

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