

communiqué



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Gender differences persist across EU labour markets

New research from the Foundation confirms that the 'glass ceiling' still exists, despite increased legislation addressing equal rights and greater numbers of women in work. Women continue to be paid less and have lower levels of control over their working time and job content than men.

The rising proportion of women in employment in recent decades has been one of the major changes affecting European labour markets. However, the increased 'weight of numbers' has not resulted in any reduction in gender segregation, which remains a persistent feature of European society.

A recently published report based on analysing data from the Foundation's Third European working conditions

survey examines the gender pattern of differences and similarities in working conditions in Europe. *The gender, jobs and working conditions in the EU* report also identifies some of the reasons for the persistence of gender segregation in the labour market.

'While the report concludes that continuity is the norm and change is the exception in working conditions in the EU, it does identify important differences between male and female workers,' says **Sabrina Tesoka**, research manager at the Foundation. 'For instance, work intensity – measured by the perceived speed of work – has increased more for women than for men over the period 1991–1995. Also, the gender gap regarding Sunday working is closing, mainly due to the increasing involvement of women in this working pattern.'

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The Foundation concluded its round of official visits to the thirteen candidate countries with visits to Cyprus and Turkey in mid-September. With EU enlargement pending, the Foundation is now well placed to hit the ground running in an extended Union.



‘We have met with the governments and social partners in all the candidate countries during our official visits starting in January this year,’ remarks Foundation Director **Raymond-Pierre Bodin**. ‘The effort by all candidate countries to enforce EU legislation in the area of social rights and standards is commendable, but the question remains as to how these changes are going to be implemented.’

Three-pronged approach

The Foundation’s administrative board decided in 2001 to adopt a three-step approach in preparing for enlargement, the series of visits being one part. The other two parts are to expand the scope and geographical reach of the Foundation monitoring tools and to involve relevant persons from the candidate countries in the

work of the Foundation. To date, it is estimated that well over 400 policy-makers, social partner experts and civil servants from the socio-economic field in the candidate countries have already either visited or participated in Foundation debates and events in 2002.

Expanding the scope of the Foundation’s work

During the visits to each country, the Foundation presented the findings of the first survey of working conditions in the candidate countries in conjunction with the social partners and governments. A resumé of the findings has just been published in English and eleven candidate country languages. The final report will be produced towards the end of 2002.

Also during 2002, the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) expanded its network with four new national correspondent centres (NCs) in Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia. By end of 2003, the expansion of the network to all candidate countries will be completed.

The new Foundation living conditions monitoring tool, ‘Quality of life in the EU’, will involve the candidate countries from the start and cover 28 countries.

Foundation governance in an enlarged Europe

Discussions have started at administrative board level concerning the future governance of the Foundation. This process is mirrored at the other two EU agencies with a tripartite governing structure, CEDEFOP and the European Agency for Health and Safety at Work. Although no decisions have been taken at this stage, the discussions so far have revealed that present board members would be in favour of retaining the current tripartite setup.

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Room for improvement

The aspect of working conditions that most undermines the work-family compatibility of jobs is long and unsociable hours, for both men and women. Women, however, are particularly concerned, since they tend to bear the overall responsibility for running the home and looking after children, even when they are employed full time.

‘Continuity is the norm and change is the exception in working conditions in the EU’

The report shows that women continue to be less well paid than men. Part-time work in particular is less well paid relative to full-time work, as expressed in hourly rates. Women are also more likely to be working directly with customers and to have experienced intimidation and discrimination at the work place. They tend to be less responsible for planning and personnel and to have a lower level of work autonomy. But, in contrast, they are less exposed than men to physical hazards in their work.

Need for gender-sensitive indicators

Although progress to reduce obstacles has been made in the development of equal treatment legislation, the Foundation analysis points to the need to further tackle the subtle organisational practices and cultures that prevent women from advancing up the hierarchical ladder.

More to the point, the report considers whether the established indicators of working conditions need to be revised to make them more ‘gender-sensitive’ to particular issues associated with women’s jobs, women’s experience in the workplace, or workload concerns within households.

The report can be downloaded at www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0249.htm.

Industrial relations in the EU and candidate countries

Strengthening the civil society could help the candidate countries reach the goals of the Lisbon Treaty, in spite of low trade union membership, undeveloped collective bargaining coverage, decentralised bargaining and lack of works councils.

When the candidate countries enter the European Union, they will bring with them very diverse systems of industrial relations in regard to their labour markets, pay levels, and employment and working conditions. According to recent research from the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which is the first comprehensive and comparative study on industrial relations in the EU Member States and the candidate countries. The report that compares industrial relations and labour market aspects in the EU Member States and the candidate countries, shows that there is a wide divergence between the two groups of countries. It will be presented at a conference on "Tripartism in an enlarged European Union" in Elsinore on 29-30 October 2002, an event coorganised by the Foundation and the Danish Ministry of Labour as part of the Danish Presidency of the European Union.

'Collective bargaining is much more centralised in the EU than in the 10 candidate countries considered in the EIRO study,' says **Stavroula Demetriades**, research coordinator of the Foundation's Industrial Relations team. 'Our report highlights the role and importance of tripartite dialogue as an indispensable instrument in realising political visions.'

Strengthened tripartite dialogue

According to the EIRO findings, governments in the candidate countries have a specific interest in strengthening the civil society in order to develop dynamic partners who can better meet the needs and interests of people. Economic and social development is closely related to increased employment, as more and better jobs provide the

basis for economic growth and greater social cohesion. Tripartism is, therefore, equally important for economic development, employment and social inclusion.

The role of tripartism

The aim of the conference, 'Tripartism in an enlarged European Union', is to demonstrate the importance of tripartite social dialogue in relation to economic and social development, and especially in relation to employment and social inclusion. While the term

'tripartism' is widely used, in the perspective of the Danish Presidency conference it refers to consultations and negotiations between representatives of workers and employers and public authorities at national and EU level.

The conference will provide an important forum for the exchange of experiences and views on tripartism, with the intention of contributing to a strengthened tripartite dialogue in an enlarged EU.

Five years of EIRO

In 2002 the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) completed its fifth year of recording and analysing trends and key developments in industrial relations across the European Union and Norway. The anniversary is marked with a publication, *Towards a qualitative dialogue in industrial relations*, which highlights by best practice examples those areas in industrial relations where innovative progress has been made. The publication will be presented at the conference on 'Tripartism in an enlarged European Union' in Elsinore on 29-30 October 2002.

The booklet highlights reporting by EIRO on the processes and outcomes of collective bargaining and dialogue between social partners, rather than on labour law or government initiatives. But swift and radical change is rare in industrial relations. The report reveals that using collective bargaining to bring about innovative measures in other areas is not common. In most countries, collective bargaining still concentrates on setting pay increases or modifying working time.

EIRO can, however, point out several important innovations over the past five years in the areas of industrial relations and lifelong learning; equality, diversity and non-discrimination; health and safety at work; flexibility and the work-life balance, and social dialogue and worker involvement. Just like the progress made in health and safety at work, and equality, diversity and non-discrimination, which have found their way to the negotiating tables of the social partners, EIRO firmly believes that quality in European industrial relations can be improved by bringing together the social partners at European and national levels, and showing examples of successful practices and innovation in bargaining across national boundaries.



You can access the European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) at www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int.

You can download the report at www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0238.htm.

For more information, contact Camilla Galli da Bino, Information Relations Officer, e-mail: gdb@eurofound.eu.int.

Quality of work and EU enlargement

The theme of more and better jobs remains high on the agenda of EU governments. One year after the Brussels conference, 'For a better quality of work', organised by the Foundation in conjunction with the Belgian government during their EU Presidency, indicators on the quality of work form an integral part of the European employment strategy.

To broaden the debate on the quality of work to cover enlargement, the Belgian Ministry of Employment is organising a conference, 'Quality in employment and enlargement of the European Union', to be held in Brussels on 18-19 October 2002. The conference is organised by the Foundation in conjunction with the Observatoire social européen and the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

'We shall highlight the Foundation's work on quality of work since the beginning, as well as our recent

development on quality of work indicators,' says **Pascal Paoli**, research coordinator for the Working Conditions team at the Foundation. 'We shall also show the results of the first survey on working conditions in the candidate countries, which we have just completed.'

The conference will bring together policy-makers and senior civil servants from EU Member States and candidate countries to the Palais d'Egmont in Brussels.

You can download the first Foundation paper, *Quality of work and employment in Europe: issues and challenges*, at www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0212.htm. Information on the first conference, 'For a Better Quality of Work', and the conference report is available at www.eurofound.eu.int/working/qualityconf.htm.

For more information, contact John Hurley, Information Liaison Officer, e-mail: joh@eurofound.eu.int.

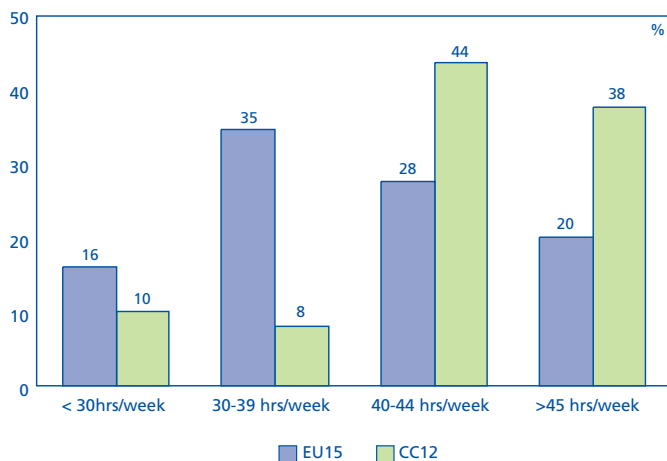
RESEARCH IN FIGURES

Working time differences between EU and candidate countries

In comparison to EU Member States, working hours in the candidate countries are longer and tend to be less gender-differentiated, ie the level of female part-time work is low in comparison to the EU. Unsocial working hours, such as shift and night work, are more prevalent.

A higher proportion of workers in the candidate countries are self-employed and working in agriculture.

Average weekly working hours



Source: Working conditions in candidate countries and the European Union, 2001.

EVENTS

Economic, employment and social implications of mergers and restructuring
Brussels, Belgium 14-15 October 2002

Quality and indicators of social services in a European context
Berlin, Germany, 16-17 October 2002

European round table on poverty and social exclusion
Aarhus, Denmark, 17-18 October 2002

Quality in employment and enlargement of the European Union
Brussels, Belgium, 18-19 October 2002

Tripartism in an enlarged European Union
Elsinore, Denmark, 29-30 October 2002

PUBLICATIONS

Gender, jobs and working conditions in the EU (report), EN
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0249.htm

Annexes to Annual report 2001, EN
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0278.htm

EIRObserver 05/02, EN
www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/eiroobserver.html

Employment relations in micro and small enterprises: literature review (overview and various country analyses), EN
www.eurofound.eu.int/working/working.htm

New work organisation, working conditions and quality of work: towards the flexible firm? (report), EN
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0274.htm

Sectoral profiles of working conditions (report), EN
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0275.htm

Temporary agency work in the EU (report), FR, NL
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0202.htm

Temps et travail: l'intensité du travail (report), FR
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0248.htm

Towards a qualitative dialogue in industrial relations (Five years of developments from EIRO), EN (shortly in DE, FR)
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0238.htm

Working conditions in candidate countries and the European Union (résumé), EN + BG, CS, ET, HU, LT, LV, PL, RO, SK, SL, TR
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0246.htm

Free publications can be downloaded directly from the website and priced publications can be ordered online (www.eurofound.eu.int). They can also be ordered from your usual bookshop or from one of the sales agents of the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (addresses available at www.eur-op.eu.int).

Wider inclusion of marginalised groups

The need to include marginalised groups in employment was emphasised by **Claus Hjort Frederiksen**, Danish Minister for Employment and current chair of the EU Council, at a major conference in Skagen, Denmark, on 4-6 September 2002. The argument has been put forward by the Foundation for some time, most recently at the conference 'Employment and labour market insertion strategies as a tool for social inclusion', which the Foundation co-organised with the Spanish Ministry for Social Affairs in Toledo, Spain, on 17-18 June 2002.

'Having a job is a prerequisite for most citizens to wider social participation. Not having one is a key factor determining whether or not a person lives in poverty.'

Improving social inclusion through social dialogue and partnership is one of the goals of the current Danish Presidency of the European Union. The Foundation contributes to the debate with the thesis that 'inclusiveness' engages the social partners as well as civil organisations and public actors.

'At the heart of the European social model is the idea that all citizens – or at least as many as possible – can participate fully in society and share the wealth created,' says **Robert Anderson**, research coordinator for the Living Conditions unit at the Foundation, who made a presentation at the event. 'Having a job is a prerequisite for most citizens to wider social participation. Not having one is a key factor determining whether or not a person lives in poverty.'

The conclusions of the conference will contribute to a proposal for a Council resolution on social inclusion at the European Council summit in Copenhagen on 12-13 December 2002.

You can download the second Foundation Paper, *Access to employment for vulnerable groups*, at www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0244.htm

For more information, contact Teresa Renehan, Information Liaison Officer, e-mail: ter@eurofound.eu.int

Longest working week in Turkey

Working hours may be growing shorter in the EU Member States but the working week remains significantly longer in most of the candidate countries and longest of all in Turkey. More than 80% of the working population in Turkey spend over 45 hours per week at work, according to recent data from the Foundation's first survey on working conditions in Turkey. These long working hours in Turkey are in comparison to an average working week of 38.3 hours in the EU as a whole. The average length of the working week for the other twelve candidate countries taken together is 44.4 hours. The Turkish survey was carried out in June 2001 and is based on 1000 face-to-face interviews with persons in employment.

The survey found high levels of self-employment and of employment in the agricultural sector, compared to the European Union, and these features will be taken into account when further analysing the data, to allow for better comparison of working conditions in Turkey, the other candidate countries and the EU Member States. Despite their long working hours, 78% of workers questioned reported satisfaction with their working conditions.

You can download the resumé of the first survey of working conditions in the candidate countries at www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0246.htm.

For an overview of the Foundation's official visits to the candidate countries, go to www.eurofound.eu.int/working/cc_sched.htm

For more information, contact John Hurley, Information Liaison Officer, e-mail: joh@eurofound.eu.int.



Serhat Ayrim, Deputy Under-Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Social Security and Raymond-Pierre Bodin, Foundation Director during the visit to Turkey in mid-September.

INSIDE THE FOUNDATION

Recent staff changes

Gloria Nistal from Spain joined on 1 September as Head of Information & Communication Technology.

Bernadette Lovatt, originally from Ireland but coming to the Foundation via Greece (CEDEFOP), commenced duties in August as a secretary in the Operational Support unit.

Maria Barreiro, programme manager in the Language Services unit, and **Charlotte Anderson**,

secretary in the Operational Support team, both departed on 1 September.

Ola Persson, research manager in the Working Conditions team, left on 30 September.

Gabriella Gottardi, secretary in the Industrial Relations team, and **Gabriele Felstrel**, secretary in the Information and Communication section, said farewell on 1 October.

Most popular downloads

Over two and a half thousand copies (2,548) of the *Third European working conditions survey* were downloaded from the Foundation website during August 2002. This surge in demand for the latest edition of the working conditions monitoring tool follows the publication of several studies based on analysis of the working conditions survey.



One such study is *Types of employment and health in the European Union* which was requested 1,597 times, twice the number of times the document was downloaded the previous month.

All the Foundation's publications are available for downloading free of charge on www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/publications.htm

Number of web users still growing

The EIROOnline website (www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int) continues to attract more and more users. In August of this year, 88,239 user sessions were recorded, representing a 10% increase over the figure for July 2002 (79,594).

In spite of the summer holidays, the Foundation's website (www.eurofound.eu.int) achieved a total of 55,474 user sessions in August.



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