

# communiqué



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

## More women at work, still with less pay

**Public authorities and social partners should implement strategies aimed at tackling gender segregation and pay differentials in labour markets across the European Union, the Foundation argues in its third Foundation paper, *Quality of women's work and employment: tools for change*.**

Employment rates for women rose from 50.6% to 54.9% over the period 1997-2001 according to European Commission figures, highlighting how much women have benefited from the creation of new jobs throughout the EU. With important in-roads into the higher-status professional and managerial positions, women's participation rates are moving closer to the Lisbon European Council goal of a female employment rate of 60% by 2010.

But despite this progress, there are still problems in terms of job quality and working conditions for women in the EU labour market.

'Despite a growing rate of employment for women, gender participation and pay gaps remain a persistent feature of the European labour market,' says **Raymond-Pierre Bodin**, the Foundation's Director. 'The third Foundation paper identifies the need to improve the gender division of paid and unpaid work as well as the potential advantages, for men and women alike, of a better work-life balance.'

### Better but still not good enough

Both Foundation research and other EU sources confirm that a gender participation



gap of on average 20% exists across the European Union. The Foundation figures, based on 30,556 interviews with economically active and inactive men and women across the EU and Norway in 1998, reveal that women

are less likely to be in paid work during each age-band. The differences are most marked in the 20-40 age-band. This implies that women's participation in paid work is curtailed by the mismatch between existing social arrangements for childcare and work organisation.

The research also shows that women continue to be paid less for doing the same, or similar, work as men. 'Women are still under-represented in some jobs and over-represented in others, relative to their percentage share of total employment,' says **Sabrina Tesoka**, research manager in the Foundation. 'Gender

**'Women are still under-represented in some jobs and over-represented in others, relative to their percentage share of total employment'**

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### MEP calls for greater visibility for the Foundation

The European taxpayer should be aware of just how well their money is being spent, said Danish MEP Freddy Blak, following a visit to the Foundation.

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### Focusing on CSR as a process, not a product

The Foundation enters the debate on corporate social responsibility with the publication of a new report looking at the issue from an innovative perspective where environmental and social issues overlap.

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### Challenges and opportunities for social dialogue in an enlarged EU

An uneven level of participation in social dialogue and tripartism might undermine the effectiveness of the economic and social policy objectives, according to a conference report.

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### Violence and harassment in the workplace on the increase

Up to 10% of the EU's working population claim to be victimised in the workplace through bullying or harassment.

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# MEP calls for greater visibility for the Foundation

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The Foundation should have a 'far greater influence' on the social policy debate, asserted **Freddy Blak**, during his visit to the Foundation on 20 January 2003. 'More people should know about the important work being carried out here,' he said, arguing for a greater visibility for the Foundation throughout the European Union. Mr Blak, a member of the Parliament's budgetary control committee, was on a two-day visit to Ireland to assess the Foundation's activities.

## Spotlight on the Living Conditions research

Following briefings with each of the research team coordinators at the Foundation, Freddy Blak acknowledged the particular importance of the work of the Living Conditions research team. Information on unemployment strategies, programmes for labour market integration and other such information is, in his view, 'extremely important'.

Moreover, MEP Blak would wholeheartedly recommend the work of the Foundation, its website and research reports to his local municipality on his return to Denmark.

## Need for more openness and transparency

Previously the Foundation's work was 'hidden': there was little understanding or awareness of what was actually done here, according to Mr Blak. While this situation has improved in recent times, there is still a need for greater promotion of its work, of increased visibility.

'During the current four-year work programme, information and communication has been given an unprecedented pole position, precisely



Raymond-Pierre Bodin (left) and Eric Verborgh (right) with Freddy Blak, MEP, together with assistants Marina Buch Kristensen and Tea Tramontanta.

aimed at improving the visibility of the Foundation, commented **Raymond-Pierre Bodin**, the Foundation's Director. 'We have increased the number of visitors to the Foundation, the number of user sessions on our websites, and the number of people accessing our research results. This strategy has already begun to show

results, and Mr Blak's comments indicate we are heading in the right direction.'

Mr Blak suggested increasing access to the Foundation by opening its doors to student groups and other potential users. 'There is great work being done but the focus should now be on ensuring that people know about it,' he concluded.

## Focusing on CSR as a process, not a product

**The Foundation enters the debate on corporate social responsibility with the publication of a new report, which looks at the issue from an innovative perspective where environmental and social issues overlap.**

The report is a synthesis of two Foundation projects which have examined corporate social responsibility from a working conditions perspective, involving restructuring and subcontracting, and from a living conditions perspective, looking at the effects on living conditions

of corporate involvement in the local community and environment.

The research is based on case studies of European companies which have voluntarily implemented good practice examples of employment and working conditions, or which are involved in the local community or the promotion of environmentally acceptable practices.

The report will be published at the end of February.

For further information, contact Teresa Renehan at e-mail: [ter@eurofound.eu.int](mailto:ter@eurofound.eu.int)

# Challenges and opportunities for social dialogue in an enlarged EU

**Governments and social partners are challenged to further develop tripartite structures and the social dialogue in order to foster economic and social progress, especially in the candidate countries.**

An uneven level of participation in social dialogue and tripartism might undermine the effectiveness of the economic and social policy objectives set throughout the European Union. This was the conclusion of the conference on 'Tripartism in an enlarged EU', co-organised by the Danish Ministry of Employment and the Foundation on 29-30 October 2002. Concrete experiences in the EU Member States show that tripartite cooperation has delivered progress on economic and social goals, sometimes in the framework of employment pacts at national, regional or local level.

In candidate countries, tripartism has supported the transition process and the restoration of democracy. However, the actors now face important organisational challenges, and industrial relations



structures are still in the process of development. In these countries, collective bargaining coverage and the membership of organisations representing both workers and employers are below the EU average.

'It is clear that we have to mobilise the resources and commitment of all the actors concerned,' comments **Eric Verborgh**,

Deputy Director of the Foundation. 'It will be necessary to build strong partnerships between governments, social partners and other civil society actors.'

The conference report is available at [www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0305.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0305.htm)

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differences are also evident in the "second shift" of household work.'

### A high priority issue

Raising employment rates has become one of the EU's top priorities. The European Employment Strategy, which came in the wake of the 1997 Luxembourg Jobs Summit, took several steps towards tackling the issues and there is a growing awareness of the importance of women in shaping the future EU labour market. EU legislation in the field of equal opportunities has also received much

attention in recent years, probably most evident in the policies of gender mainstreaming following the implementation of the Amsterdam Treaty in the Member States.

### The tools for change

The Foundation paper suggests a series of tools and strategies that could improve the quality of women's work and employment. Foundation research has repeatedly shown that public authorities and social partners have an essential role to play in redefining a new welfare structure which improves

the work and family-life balance. Using collective bargaining as a strategy on the one hand, and corporate initiatives on the other, Foundation research shows that it is possible to raise EU employment rates by supporting women entering or re-entering the labour market. The most determining factor in this process, however, is the quality of women's jobs.

The new Foundation paper, *Quality of women's work and employment: tools for change*, is available at [www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF02110.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF02110.htm)

NEWS IN BRIEF

# The EMCC company network seminars

**A**imed at strengthening direct links to companies, the European Monitoring Centre on Change (EMCC) will organise a series of seminars for managers and worker representatives in 2003. Topics chosen for the four seminars focus on the responsible management of change. The first seminar will take place in Brussels, Belgium on 12 and 13 March. Entitled 'Managing business internationalisation' it will deal with the challenges of internationalisation, examining how companies have dealt with, and profited from, cultural diversity when they have transferred operations across different countries.

A further three seminars will look at responsible management as a general approach, restructuring for growth and job creation, and successful management and leadership styles in business transformation.

To learn more about the EMCC company network seminars, visit [www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int](http://www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int)

For further information on the seminars, contact Barbara Gerstenberger at e-mail [bge@eurofound.eu.int](mailto:bge@eurofound.eu.int)

# Monitoring quality of life in candidate countries

**A** new Foundation project will tackle the information deficit on quality of life issues in the candidate countries and the EU Member States. The project, which is aimed at monitoring living conditions and quality of life, is expected to feed into the

work of the social and demography analysis of the European Commission's Directorate-General for Employment.

A first meeting of the network of experts working with the Foundation's Living Conditions research unit on 'monitoring living conditions and quality of life in candidate countries' was held in Budapest on 26-27 November 2002. The experts will assist with the analysis and interpretation of survey results, covering areas such as housing and living environment; health and health services; education; employment and working conditions; family and social networks; time use; social capital and public services and economic resources.

To learn more about the monitoring initiative on quality of life in the EU and the candidate countries, visit [www.eurofound.eu.int/living.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/living.htm)

For further information, contact Teresa Renehan at e-mail: [ter@eurofound.eu.int](mailto:ter@eurofound.eu.int)

# Working Conditions Observatory in the making

**A** new Working Conditions Observatory will be launched by the Foundation in 2003. The innovative online monitoring tool on working conditions will use a network of expert working conditions correspondents across Europe, who will feed news and other information into the Observatory website.

'The Working Conditions Observatory will also be supported by seminars and news on the web,' says **Pascal Paoli**, coordinator of the Working Conditions team.

For further information, contact John Hurley at e-mail: [joh@eurofound.eu.int](mailto:joh@eurofound.eu.int)

EXTERNAL EVENTS

**Joint seminar on stress at work**  
Brussels, Belgium, 25 February 2003  
Joint seminar ETUC, UNICE and CEEP

**Using information sources on industrial relations in Europe**  
Dublin, Ireland, 6-8 March 2003  
Joint seminar, Foundation and ETUCO

**Company network seminar: Managing business internationalisation**  
Brussels, Belgium, 12 March 2003  
Foundation event

**Social dialogue seminar on gender equality**  
Brussels, Belgium, 13 March 2003  
Joint seminar UNICE, UEAPME, CEEP, ETUC

**Work stress and health**  
Toronto, Canada, 19 March 2003  
American Psychological Association / National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health

**Mental illness and stigma**  
Athens, Greece, 27 March 2003  
Greek Presidency conference

**Better work and life: Towards an inclusive and competitive enlarged Union**  
Alexandroupolis, Greece, 7 April 2003  
Greek Presidency conference, jointly organised by the Greek Ministry of Labour and the Foundation

PUBLICATIONS

**Challenges and opportunities for social dialogue and tripartism: Summary of an EU Presidency conference** (Elsinore, Oct 2002)  
EN: [www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0305.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0305.htm)

**EIRObserver 01/03**  
EN: [www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/eiroobserver.html](http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/eiroobserver.html)

**The Europeanisation of industrial relations in a global perspective: A literature review**  
EN: [www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF02102.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF02102.htm)

**Programme of work 2003**  
All languages: [www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/General.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/General.htm)

**Quality of women's work and employment: Tools for change (Foundation paper No. 3)**  
EN: [www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF02110.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF02110.htm)

**Time and work: duration of work (report)**  
EN + FR: [www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0211.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0211.htm)

**Working conditions in candidate countries and the EU (résumé)**  
EN + FR + candidate country languages:  
[www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0246.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0246.htm)

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# Violence and harassment in the workplace on the increase

**By addressing the growing victimisation and bullying in workplaces across Europe, a reduction of up to 2% in the costs of high absenteeism rates, ill-health and early retirement, high staff turnover and increased insurance premiums can be achieved.**

About 10% of the EU's working population claim to be victimised in the workplace through bullying or harassment. Similarly, up to 10% have been exposed to physical violence (or the threat of it) in the workplace in the last year, according to a recent report by the Foundation. The report, which also highlights the financial benefits to be gained by reducing violence and harassment in the workplace, reveals the problem to be on the increase throughout all EU Member States.

Faced with a persistent lack of data, as well as continued disparity between awareness and recognition of all forms of violence and harassment at work, the report makes a distinction between

physical and psychological aspects of violence, rather than attempting to define and describe the many forms and aspects of violence and harassment.

## Women at work

The report shows that both men and women experience violence at work, but women remain more vulnerable than men, with women often concentrated in 'high-risk' jobs such as nursing, social work and teaching. Women are also most often victims of intimidation and psychological abuse while men are more frequently exposed to physical violence and assaults. Results also show that sexual harassment at work, particularly against women, is commonplace in all European countries but often still goes unreported due to fear of being ostracised, job loss and other factors.

## Who carries the cost?

Worker productivity can be reduced by about 2% as a result of psychological violence alone, according to the statistics available. There are growing signs of

negative financial and productivity implications of violence and harassment at work, with higher absenteeism rates, ill-health and early retirement, high staff turnover and increased insurance premiums. The evidence shows that both physical and psychological violence has serious implications for health and well-being, causing stress disorders and suicidal tendencies, while the effects can negatively impact on relationships with family and friends. Overall cost estimates suggest there are considerable financial gains in reducing workplace violence.

Since the regulatory framework for preventing violence and harassment at work is extremely varied across EU Member States, EU bodies are playing an important role in providing possible solutions in terms of policy documents, recommendations and directives.

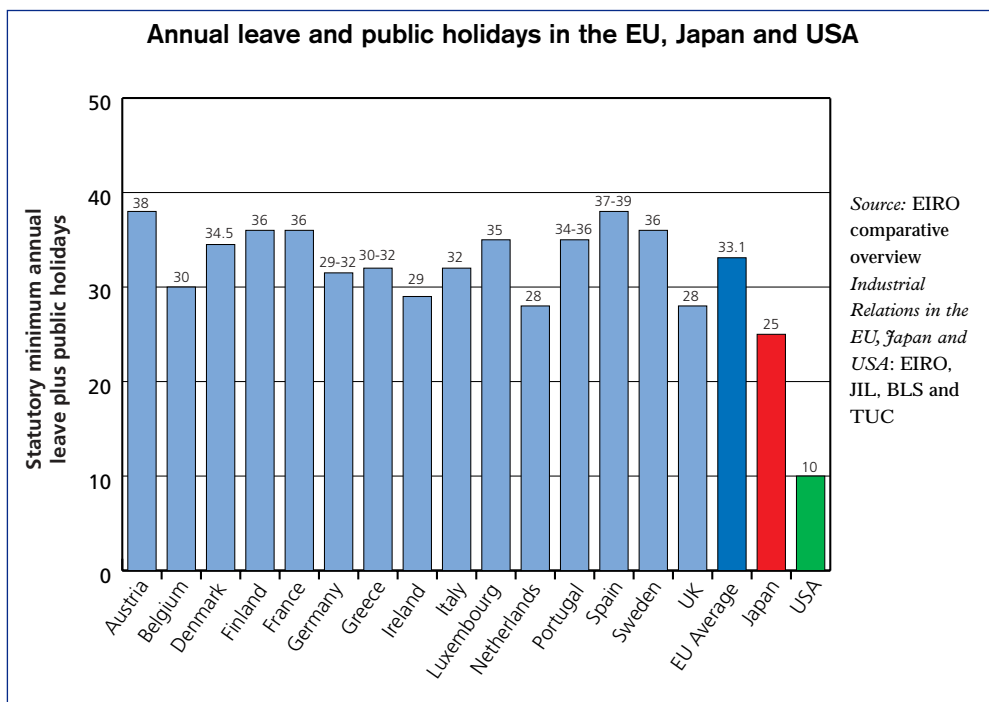
To download the report, go to [www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF02109.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF02109.htm)  
Further information is available from John Hurley at e-mail: [joh@eurofound.eu.int](mailto:joh@eurofound.eu.int)

## RESEARCH IN FIGURES

# Longer annual leave in the EU than in Japan and USA

**Average paid annual leave in the EU Member States is three times longer than in the USA. The Japanese have almost as much paid annual leave on average as workers in the EU Member States.**

Despite a statutory minimum period of paid annual leave, there are large differences between EU Member States. Spaniards have the longest average annual leave at 39 days, including public holidays, and the Irish the shortest with 29 days, according to a comparative overview of industrial relations in the EU Member States, Japan and USA.

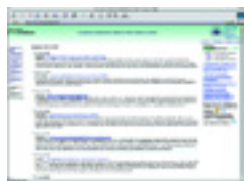


INSIDE THE FOUNDATION

# Eurofound: almost 80% increase in users

**Eurofound, the Foundation's main website, recorded a massive 78% increase in user sessions in 2002 compared to 2001. The EIROnline website also saw its user figures soar with a 156% rise in 2002, indicating that the Foundation's focus on the Internet as a channel for communication is paying off.**

The EIROnline website ([www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int](http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int)),



recorded a total of over one million user sessions in 2002, and the Eurofound

website ([www.eurofound.eu.int](http://www.eurofound.eu.int))



recorded just over 800,000. The number of user sessions for the recently launched portal

of the Foundation's European Monitoring Centre on Change (EMCC)

([www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int](http://www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int)) is also growing steadily.



The increased number of users can be explained in part by the regular updating

of keywords by which the Foundation's

information can be found in the major search engines on the Internet. In December 2001, 10,570 user sessions originated from search engines, about 19% of total user sessions for that month. In December 2002, 18,681 user sessions originated from a search engine, about 25% of total user sessions. Regular users, i.e. users visiting any of the Foundation websites more than once during a period of one month, have also grown in number.

A formal web user survey will be carried out by the Foundation in May and June of this year.

'We decided to focus on the Internet as a tool to disseminate our research information more efficiently and better communicate with our stakeholders and target audiences,' said **Fiona Murray**, web manager. 'Judging by these statistics, our strategy has paid off.'

## Gearing up for 2003

**The EIRO network gathered in Dublin on 13-14 January 2003, including the new EIRO National Centres for Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.**

On the agenda were comparative studies on industrial relations and migration, collective bargaining on occupational pensions, and regulation of Internet use by employees, to be published during the year.



## communiqué

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