



Post and telecommunications

Fact sheet

Background

Eurofound's European Working Conditions Surveys (EWCS) have been carried out every five years since 1991. Each wave of the survey provides an overview of the state of working conditions throughout Europe and indicates the nature and extent of changes affecting the workforce and the quality of work. The fieldwork for Eurofound's most recent edition of the EWCS was carried out in 2005 in 31 countries, including the 27 EU Member States, plus candidate countries Croatia and Turkey, as well as EFTA countries Norway and Switzerland. In 2005, the sample size was set at 1000 per country (600 for Cyprus, Estonia, Luxemburg, Malta and Slovenia).

Following the 2005 survey, Eurofound asked TNO Work & Employment to perform a secondary statistical analysis of the data from the fourth EWCS 2005 on sector profiles with regard to working conditions in the 27 Member States. For the analysis, NACE Revision 1.1¹ was applied. The findings are set out in 26 fact sheets, each covering one of the 26 sectors in the NACE classification. Each fact sheet presents:

- a profile of the sector's socio-demographic characteristics based on data at NACE at 1 and 2 digit level;
- a profile of working conditions in the sector based on data at NACE at 1 and 2 digit level.

This fact sheet presents a snapshot of working conditions in the post and telecommunications sector (Nace Rev 1.1, I 64).

Sector profile

The post and telecommunications sector is characterised by relatively high job tenure: a higher than average proportion of workers report being in the company for 16 years or longer (31.6% compared to the cross-sector average of 22.4%). Also, in this sector, most of the workers are employees (95.4%) and self-employment is very uncommon (4.6%).

In terms of company size, workers in the post and communications sector are more likely to be employed in enterprises with 250 or more people (29.4% compared to the average of 15%). Similarly, one-person companies (1.6%) and micro enterprises with 2–9 employees (14%) are less prevalent in the sector when compared to the respective averages of 10.4% and 27.5%.

Differences by job tenure, type of employment, and company size between this sector and the average for all sectors are not statistically significant and therefore do not merit further analysis here.

¹ This is a revision of the 'General Industrial Classification of Economic Activities within the European Communities', known by the acronym NACE and originally published by Eurostat in 1970. The NACE code was subsequently revised (REV. 1.1) in the 1990s.

Gender		
	Men	Women
Post and telecommunications	61.8%	38.2%
All sectors	55.5%	44.5%

Age					
	Average age	Age group			
		≤ 24 years	25-39 years	40-54 years	≥ 55 years
Post and telecommunications	40.7	9.5%	35.0%	41.5%	14.0%
All sectors	40.0	11.8%	36.8%	38.6%	12.7%

Years in company or organisation				
	≥ 2 years	3-5 years	6-15 years	≤16 years
Post and telecommunications	27.3%	18.7%	22.5%	31.6%▲▲▲
All sectors	27.1%	20.9%	29.6%	22.4%

Type of employment		
	Self-employed	Employee
Post and telecommunications	4.6%▼▼▼	95.4%▲▲▲
All sectors	16.7%	83.3%

Employment contract		
	Permanent contract	Non-permanent contract
Post and telecommunications	81.1%	18.9%
All sectors	76.6%	23.4%

Company size					
	One-person company	Micro enterprise (2-9 employees)	Small enterprise (10-49 employees)	Medium enterprise (50-249 employees)	Large enterprise (250+ employees)
Post and telecommunications	1.6%▼▼▼	14.0%▼▼▼	28.6%	26.4%	29.4%▲▲▲
All sectors	10.4%	27.5%	27.7%	19.4%	15.0%

Education level							
	No education	Primary education (ISCED 1)	Lower secondary education (ISCED 2)	Upper secondary education (ISCED 3)	Post-secondary including pre-vocational or vocational education	Tertiary education - first level (ISCED 5)	Tertiary education - advanced level (ISCED 6)
Post and telecommunications	0.2%	2.0%	13.7%	50.4%	5.9%	27.6%	0.4%
All sectors	0.9%	5.3%	16.5%	44.5%	7.3%	23.5%	2.0%

Income level				
	Income bands			
	Lowest	Low	High	Highest
Post and telecommunications	19.8%	28.4%	32.5%	19.4%
All sectors	25.1%	23.9%	26.7%	24.3%

How to read the table

The comparison is between the subgroup/sector and the average for all sectors based on the 2005 European Working Conditions Survey sample for the EU27. ▲ (p<0.05), ▲▲ (p<0.01), and ▲▲▲ (p<0.001) indicate differences between the sector profiled and the sample average at different levels of statistical significance. Each mean is tested with parametric tests of difference (t-test) to determine whether such differences are statistically significant. The more triangles, the higher the statistical significance of the figure (i.e. it is more likely to reflect a real difference in the population).

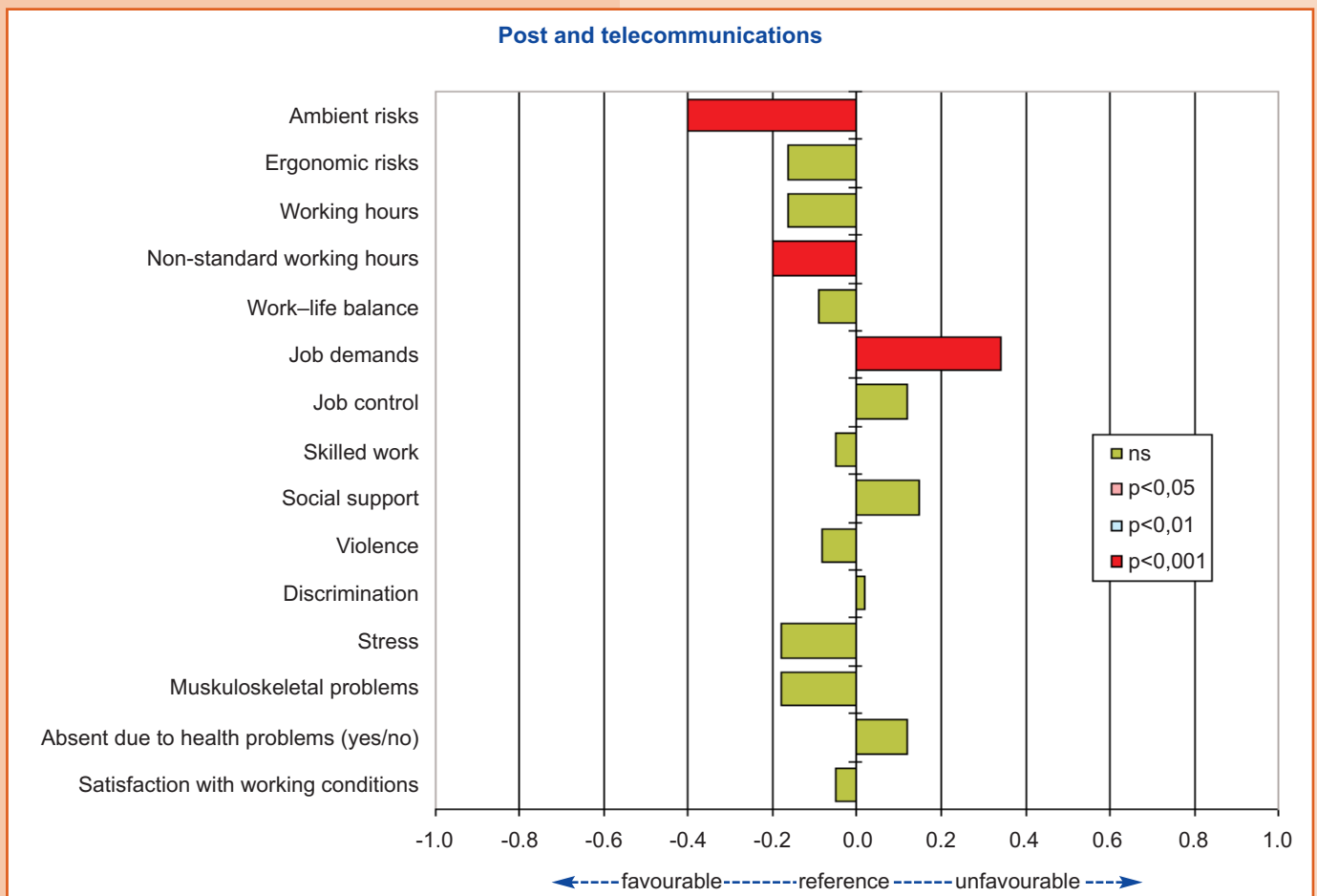
Where estimates are not accompanied by triangles, this indicates that observed differences are not statistically significant.

Working conditions and outcomes

The figure below shows specific dimensions of working conditions with favourable and unfavourable scores in post and telecommunications, taking as a point of reference mean exposure (0.0 score in the chart below).

Looking at the statistically significant differences only, employees in the post and telecommunications sector score unfavourably on the job demands indicator (defined as working at high speed and to tight deadlines). Conversely, workers in this sector score favourably on

exposure to ambient risks (exposure to vibrations, noise, high/low temperatures, breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust, breathing in vapours, handling chemical products or substances) and non-standard working hours (night and evening work, Saturday/ Sunday work and more than 10 working hours a day).



How to read the figure

For the profiling of the sector, eleven aspects of working conditions (mainly composite indexes based on several variables) and four outcomes (stress, musculoskeletal disorders, absence due to health problems and job satisfaction) were taken into account.

In the chart above, $p < 0.001$ represents the highest level of statistical significance, while $p < 0.01$ and $p < 0.05$ indicate comparatively lower levels of statistical significance; 'ns' stands for no statistically significant difference. Statistical differences from the average can be either favourable (scores on the left side of the chart) or unfavourable (scores on the right side of the chart) on a specific set of working conditions.

Score values greater than ± 0.2 indicate a small deviation from mean exposure (0.0) while score values ranging from ± 0.2 to ± 0.5 and greater than ± 0.5 indicate respectively substantial and very substantial deviation from mean exposure.

For example, the chart above shows that values indicating job demands/work intensity are highly statistically significant ($p < 0.001$) and greater than $+0.2$ in the relative scale meaning that workers in the post and telecommunications sector report a comparatively higher level of job demands than the average.

Key findings

- In terms of socio-demographic characteristics, the post and telecommunications sector is characterised by a higher than average degree of job stability and a comparatively high prevalence of permanent employment contracts.
- Moreover, workers in this sector are more likely to work in large enterprises (250 or more employees).
- With regard to working conditions, employees in the post and telecommunications sector report a relatively high level of job demands. However, they are subject to a lower than average exposure to ambient risks and non-standard working hours.

Methodology

The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) is carried out every five years by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound), a tripartite European agency based in Dublin. The questionnaire is developed by the Eurofound team in close cooperation with an expert questionnaire development group. This group comprises representatives of the European social partners, other EU bodies (European Commission, Eurostat, European Agency for Safety and Health at work), international organisations (OECD, ILO), national statistical institutes, as well as leading European experts in the field. The sample of the EWCS is representative of persons in employment (according to the Eurostat definition this comprises both employees and the self-employed aged 15 years and over) resident in the countries covered for the respective periods. In each country, the EWCS sample followed a multi-stage, stratified and clustered design with a random walk procedure for the selection of the respondents at the last stage. All interviews were conducted face-to-face in the respondent's own household.

Further Eurofound research on the sector

Representativeness of the social partners: Telecommunications sector

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0606017s/index.htm>

Representativeness of the European social partner organisations: Post and courier services

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0712017s/index.htm>

EMCC dossier on the European telecoms sector

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/emcc/content/source/eu05008a.htm>

Further information

The Fourth *European Working Conditions Survey* report and secondary analysis of survey data are available on the *European Working Conditions Observatory* website:
<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/surveys/ewcs2005/>

For further information please contact:
Sara Riso, Information Liaison Officer
sri@eurofound.europa.eu