Sixth European Working Conditions Survey: 2015

Data visualisation

Visualise, explore and compare EU and country data on working conditions, quality of work and work–life balance in our interactive data visualisation tool.

Eurofound’s European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) paints a wide-ranging picture of Europe at work across countries, occupations, sectors and age groups. Its findings highlight actions for policy actors to help them address the challenges facing Europe today. In 2015, Eurofound carried out its sixth survey in the series (in operation since 1991). This sixth survey interviewed nearly 44,000 workers in 35 countries. Its findings provide detailed information on a broad range of issues, including exposure to physical and psychosocial risks, work organisation, work–life balance, and health and well-being.

Main findings

Overall, the survey finds, structural inequalities and differences in terms of gender, employment status and occupation are still significant. In the last 10 years, there has been limited progress in some aspect of job quality.

Sixth European Working Conditions Survey overview report

The sixth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) builds on the lessons learned from the previous five surveys to paint a wide-ranging picture of Europe at work across countries, occupations, sectors and age groups.

- Publication: Sixth EWCS overview report
- Blog: Jobs, jobs, jobs! Three beautiful words for Mr Trump
- Blog: Europe’s slow-burning issue – making work sustainable
- Launch event: Changing working conditions in Europe: Moving towards better work

Going beyond the objective measures of job quality, the report also looks at workers’ own assessment of their working lives. It finds associations between the different dimensions of job quality and factors such as engagement, financial security, the development of skills and competences, health and well-being, the reconciliation of work and private life, and the sustainability of work.
Background

This sixth survey is an important landmark for Eurofound: it builds on the lessons learned from the previous five surveys and provides a rich portrait of workplace trends in Europe over the last 25 years. Moreover, involving 35 countries, the sixth survey is the most comprehensive to date, in terms of the number of countries covered.

- The first survey, in 1991, covered just 12 countries.
- The second survey, in 1995, covered 15 countries.
- The third survey (2000) covered 16 countries (the EU15 and Norway). This third survey was then extended in 2001 to cover the 10 EU candidate countries.
- The fourth survey, in 2005, covered the 25 EU Member States and the two countries that would join in 2007 (Bulgaria and Romania). Also covered were Croatia, Turkey, Switzerland and Norway (31 countries in total).
- The fifth survey, in 2010, covered the 27 EU Member States, Croatia, Turkey and Norway (Switzerland was not included). Also covered in this survey were Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia – a total of 34 countries.
- The sixth survey, in 2015, covered the 28 EU Member States, the five EU candidate countries (Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey), as well as Switzerland and Norway.

Methodology

Eurofound’s survey partners, Ipsos NV, interviewed working people randomly selected from a statistical sample, comprising a cross-section of society. Depending on country size and national arrangements, the sample ranged from 1,000 to 3,300 people per country.

The face-to-face interviews were carried out in peoples’ homes and covered a comprehensive list of questions regarding their working conditions. (All the information gathered has been treated in the strictest confidentiality and the anonymity of each interviewee guaranteed). Full details of the survey methodology are available online.

Further information

The sixth EWCS microdata is now available. Eurofound’s secondary analyses of the survey data will be published from 2017. These will examine such issues as working time, self-employed, ageing, employee engagement and development, work and health, employment status and working conditions.

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