

communiqué



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Foundation findings place family policies back on the agenda

The Foundation puts forward the case for a greater policy focus on the family, on the basis of recent research findings that show high levels of satisfaction with the quality of family life across the European Union.

Europeans are very satisfied with the quality of their family life, according to findings from two recent Foundation surveys on quality of life and family issues in the enlarged EU of 25. Having family support is a key element in a multi-dimensional concept of quality of life across the EU 25, ranked third behind 'good health' and 'sufficient income' in terms of the most important factors.

Family still the cornerstone of European society

Family policy in Europe faces key challenges resulting from rapid economic, social, cultural and political change. The family – its structure, domestic arrangements, and sources of support – is a crucial component in a successful economic and social policy, argues the

Foundation in its report on *Fertility and family issues in an enlarged Europe*. The report puts the spotlight on the importance of family support for quality of life, as perceived by Europeans across 25 Member States.

Care for the elderly a family matter

With today's increased life expectancy and lower fertility rates, there is a growing gap between the increasing numbers of elderly people who need care and the declining number of family members available to provide it. The research shows that at present around 25% of adults in the new EU Member States are involved in regular but informal care of others, compared with around 21% of people in the former EU 15.

However, given the ageing of the population, the number of persons in need of care is expected to grow in the near future. The report shows that 80% of people in the new EU Member States advocate extended family care in the future, with a corresponding figure of 59% in the EU 15.

When asked who should pay for the care of elderly parents, people in the new EU Member States are divided between state financing and sharing costs with families, while half the people in the former EU 15 favour state financing.

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More information at
www.eurofound.eu.int/living/qual_life/index.htm



Social policy a priority for Dutch EU Presidency

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Monitoring industrial change in Europe: future prospects

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Quality of life in Europe: theme of the next information campaign

Over the coming six months, the Foundation will present its data and analysis on the views of Europeans concerning employment and living standards across Europe. The research covers the multi-dimensional concept of quality of life, ranging from households and family, care and community and housing, to local environment and public services.

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Increasing number of lay-offs in the first quarter of 2004

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‘Knowledge and networks, industrial and service sector competitiveness, and active ageing are three strategic domains in which the EU Member States do not show sufficient progress to reach the Lisbon criteria, according to the report of the European Employment Task Force,’ declared **Willy Buschak**, the Foundation’s acting Director. ‘We are preparing to input our knowledge, data and analysis in these important areas during the Dutch EU presidency.’

During six months from 1 July, the Dutch government has chosen to focus on social measures for combating social exclusion, improved childcare and discrimination in the context of an enlarged European Union. The Foundation will coorganise with the Dutch Presidency two major European conferences to further the discussions on achieving a better work–life balance, sustainable pensions and quality of industrial relations in a Europe of 25 countries:

Towards effective intervention and sector dialogue in occupational safety and health

Amsterdam, 15-17 September 2004

The quality of labour relations

The Hague, 7-8 October 2004

Other conferences organised during the Dutch Presidency include the following:

International forum on disability management

Maastricht, 13-15 September 2004

Working fathers, caring men

Rotterdam, 24-25 September 2004

Round table on social exclusion in an enlarged Europe

The Hague, 14-15 October 2004

Jobs for Europe

Amsterdam, 25-26 October 2004

Towards a better balance between men and women at work

Amsterdam, 3-4 November 2004

Long-term and viable sustainability of private pensions

Amsterdam, 4 November 2004

Social policy in an enlarged Europe

Rotterdam, 8-9 November 2004

Women, security and conflict

Amsterdam, 9-10 December 2004

Monitoring industrial change in Europe: future prospects

European social partners, governments and the European Commission expressed their overall satisfaction with the progress of the European Monitoring Centre on Change (EMCC) at the EMCC Exchange 2004 conference in Brussels on 29 April last. The event brought together the EMCC’s stakeholders with the aim of reviewing the centre’s achievements over the past two and a half years and plotting its course for the future.

More anticipation and monitoring of good practice

The EMCC’s main mission is to help social partners, SMEs and businesses, and governments identify and anticipate trends of industrial change. Over the past couple of years, the EMCC has scored points with its stakeholders by identifying and

analysing the effects of drivers of change like information technology and financial markets on businesses and sectors. With its Company Network in place and extensive contacts with experts and researchers, the EMCC is well positioned to identify what works in managing change and to disseminate this message to companies throughout Europe.

European social partners get involved

As an acknowledgement of its efficiency and effectiveness, the European social partners are keen to help marketing the EMCC to users at national level.

‘We are poised to bring our knowledge to a wider audience, and naturally welcome any help in marketing our products and tools,’ says Barbara

Gerstenberger, research coordinator of the EMCC team. ‘Since 2002, our efforts have borne fruit: about 300 people have participated in EMCC exchange events across Europe, the EMCC portal has recorded almost 100,000 user sessions and over 50 seminar reports, case examples and sector analysis have been published.’

Sticking to the sectoral approach

The EMCC’s efforts to identify and examine the impact of drivers of industrial change at the sectoral level have proven beneficial to its users and stakeholders. There is, however, a clear demand on the part of the social partners for EMCC to expand its coverage to include more sectors and begin analysing trends at sub-sectoral level. At present, the EMCC collects information and provides analysis on drivers of change in 26 sectors.

Quality of life in Europe: theme of the next information campaign

Over the coming six months, the Foundation will present its data and analysis on the views of Europeans concerning quality of life across Europe. The research covers the multi-dimensional concept of quality of life, ranging from households and family, care and community and housing, to local environment and public services. These core domains were selected according to their relevance to quality of life and their position on the EU policy agenda. The findings are based on the Foundation's own survey of 26,000 people across 28 countries: the 25 EU Member States and the three candidate countries Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

Putting it into context

The quality of life information campaign in 2004 consists of twelve bilateral country visits and four international seminars. During the national events, representatives from governments, social partners, civil

society and experts will be invited to debate the findings.

'We believe improved living and working conditions are essential for the successful completion of the enlargement process,' says **Robert Anderson**, research coordinator of the Living Conditions team. 'Together, these reports constitute a unique and comprehensive source of information and a vital input to policymaking in the fields that affect living and working conditions in an enlarged Europe.'

A quality of life exhibition will be on display in each of the new Member States, presenting other areas of the Foundation's work in addition to the quality of life focus.

Provisional timetable for visits

29 June - 2 July

Visit to Poland and Germany

8-9 September

Visit to the Czech Republic

22-24 September

International seminar and visit to Estonia, with invited participants from

Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Lithuania, and Sweden

5-8 October

Visit to the Netherlands

25-26 October

International seminar and visit to Cyprus, with invited participants from Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Malta, Romania and Turkey

10-12 November

International seminar and visit to Slovakia, with invited participants from Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany and Poland

22-24 November

International seminar and visit to France, with invited participants from Belgium, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom

8-10 December

Visit to Latvia and Lithuania

16-18 December

Visit to Austria and Slovenia

Foundation findings place family policies back on the agenda

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Good sense of inter-generational solidarity

Solidarity between generations is found to be quite strong, counteracting often-repeated claims in the public arena of a 'war between the generations'. Some 85% of people in the new EU Member States and the former EU 15 claim that deep conflicts between the generations do not exist. Almost half of the citizens of the former EU 15 declare racial and ethnic tensions to be the most important societal dimensions, whereas more than half of the population in the new EU Member States identify tensions between rich and poor as the main dividing line in society.

Different perceptions of family policy

According to the findings, people in the former EU 15 consider that social policy directed at families with children should focus on reducing unemployment and raising employment rates. They also feel that flexible working hours and available childcare provisions are important aspects of social policy. Citizens in the new Member States, however, have different priorities: they indicate that government initiatives aimed at increasing child-related income and reducing child-related costs are of paramount importance in family policies.



NEWS IN BRIEF

Benchmarking the quality of industrial relations in the public sector

The stable and secure employment relationship that may have been characteristic of local government organisations in the past is likely to be increasingly difficult to maintain in the future, the Foundation asserts in its recently published report, *The quality of industrial relations in the European public sector*. The report presents a set of 12 quality benchmarks on the quality of industrial relations, which is intended to serve as a basis for self-assessment and for the promotion of mutual learning across the public sector and across countries.

The research took a three-pronged approach which involved a literary review, an analysis of current collective agreements and legislation, and a survey of industrial relations experts in local government. The 26 experts were drawn from Finland, Germany, Ireland, and Italy, selected to represent the different models of industrial relations across Europe.

The report can be downloaded from www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF03104.htm

Changing attitudes toward financial participation

Workers across Europe are set to receive profit-sharing, share ownership or stock option schemes as part of a changing attitude towards financial participation by governments and social partners across Europe. This is one of the findings of *Financial participation: The role of government and social partners*, a recently published report which forms part of the Foundation's on-going research in the field.

While trade unions still remain cautious about the merits of such measures for workers, the report shows that governments and employer organisations have radically changed their attitudes since 1996, when these were last recorded at EU level by the second 'PEPPER' report from the European Commission. The report argues that recent changes in some countries, most notably Belgium, appear to have been stimulated by debates at EU level, taking on board many principles developed there.

The report is available at www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0440.htm

Preparations for the fourth European Working Conditions survey

A series of meetings involving Foundation staff, external experts and Foundation Administrative Board members will take place over the summer months to finalise preparations for the fourth *European Working Conditions* survey. The survey will take place in spring 2005 and will involve interviews with over 30,000 individual workers across the newly-enlarged EU. The first results should present a revealing portrait of workplace trends in Europe. To date, the Foundation has carried out three EU working conditions surveys (1990, 1995 and 2000), as well as a survey in the 10 former acceding countries and the three candidate countries in 2001. The 2005 survey will cover the EU 25 as well as the three candidate countries and will include detailed coverage of a broad range of issues, including working time, work organisation, job content, training/skills development and workplace health risks including psychosocial risks.

More information is available on www.eurofound.eu.int/working/surveys

PUBLICATIONS

Advancement of the knowledge society: comparing Europe, the US and Japan (report)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0403.htm

Advancement of the knowledge society: comparing Europe, the US and Japan (summary)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0409.htm

Annual report 2003 – 11 languages
www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0429.htm

Annual report 2003 – annexes
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0476.htm

EIRObserver no 3/04
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0481.htm

European knowledge society foresight: The Euforia project synthesis
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0404.htm

Financial markets as drivers of change at the enterprise level: case studies
EN: http://www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/content/source/eu04007a.html?p1=EF%20publication&p2=EMCC_publications

Financial participation: The role of governments and social partners (report)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0440.htm

Financial participation: The role of governments and social partners (summary)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0459.htm

From polarisation to partnership: Time for change (conference summary)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0444.htm

Industrial relations and enlargement (info sheet)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0443.htm

Industrial relations in the EU, Japan and USA 2002 (report)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0430.htm

Knowledge society barometer (report)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0416.htm

Quality of life in the Spanish workplace 2003 (survey report)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0478.htm

Textiles and leather in Europe: the end of an era or a new beginning?
EN: www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/content/source/tn04004a.html

Violence, bullying and harassment in the workplace (topic report)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0482.htm

Working poor in the EU (report)
EN: www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0467.htm

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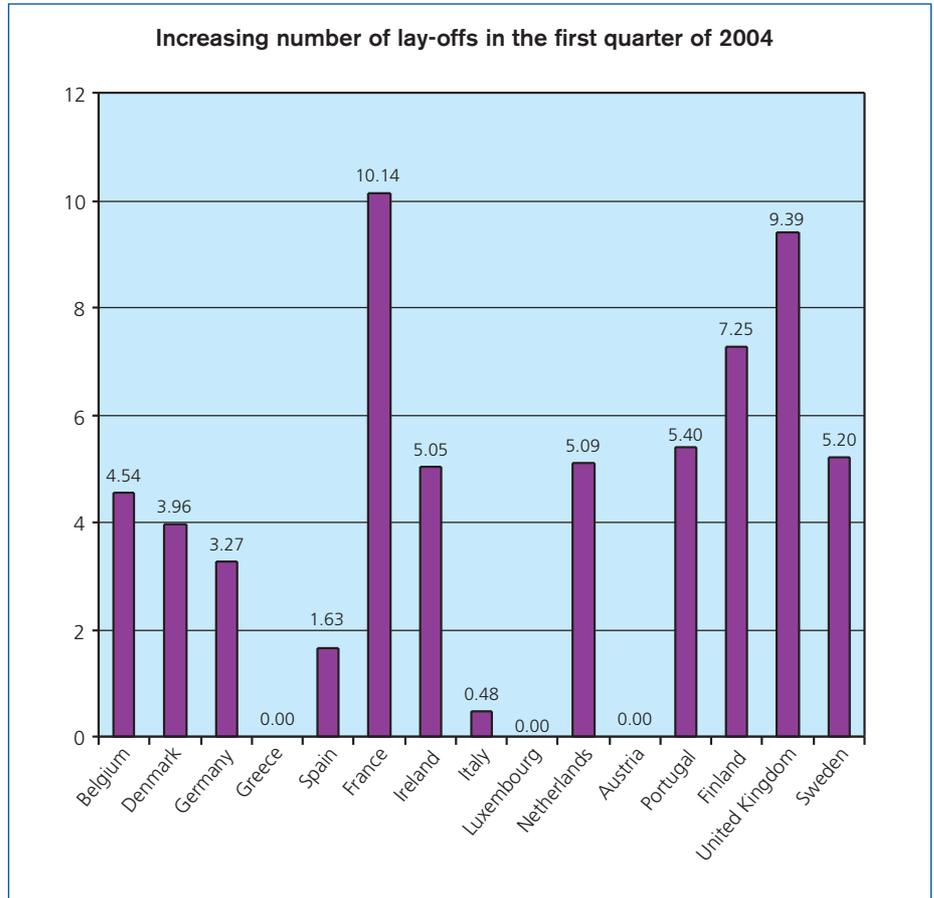
RESEARCH IN FIGURES

Increasing number of lay-offs in the first quarter of 2004

Companies across Europe announced the loss of 81,129 jobs as a result of their restructuring initiatives during the first three months of 2004, according to recent data from the European Restructuring Monitor. France (9.39%) and the United Kingdom (10.14%) stand out with the highest number of job losses per 10,000 people, ending the trend of significant job losses restricted to only the small economies of Europe.

However, during the same period, PSA Peugeot Citroën in France announced its intention to recruit 7,000 employees in 2004. B&Q, the UK DIY retailer, announced it would open 20 new retail outlets in the near future, recruiting a total of 3,500 people.

The ERM can be accessed via www.erm.emcc.eurofound.eu.int



Trends and drivers of change in the European railway sector

In response to a request by Employment and Social Affairs Commissioner Stavros Dimas on the situation within the railway sector, EMCC drew up a brief analysis of the trends and drivers of change likely to shape future developments within the sector. The report looks at how current trends such as the growing demand for transport services, deregulation and industry reforms, enlargement, funding and innovation all impact on the railway equipment industry in Europe. The outlook for the market seems positive with an expected annual growth rate of 3% to 5%. This should offer opportunities for well-adapted companies to increase their output and

create employment, according to industry representatives. To support further growth in the sector, industry is currently calling on policymakers to proceed with further liberalisation of national railways and to support the interoperability of European networks as well as to harmonise acceptance, testing and safety rules for equipment.

The report also outlines the consequences for employment in the sector. To illustrate these, the analysis provides company profiles of two major players in the European market – Alstom S.A. of France and Bombardier Inc. of Canada. Despite positive results in their transport business divisions and favourable industry forecasts, both

companies are in the process of implementing large-scale restructurings leading to substantial workforce reductions in Europe. The company profiles also set out a brief description of all manufacturing plants affected by these restructuring plans as announced in the European Restructuring Monitor www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/erm.

Link to EMCC dossier:
<http://www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/content/source/eu04015a.html>



INSIDE THE FOUNDATION

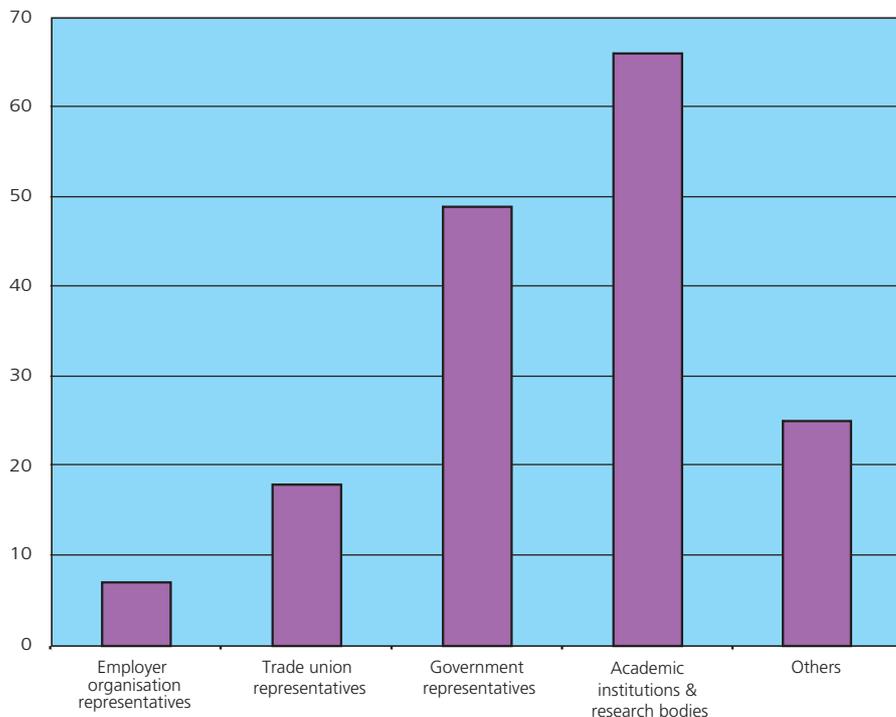
The Foundation's 'open-door' policy

While May has always been a busy month for visitors to the Foundation, this year has seen a 30% increase in numbers.

The Foundation has recorded a 30% increase in the number of visitors compared to the same period last year, with 165 visitors in May 2004 as against 130 in May 2003. The increase is generally viewed as a result of the Irish Presidency as well as an affirmation of efforts to make the Foundation a meeting place for open and frank discussion.

The largest contingent of visitors is from academic institutions, representing 40% of the total number of visitors or 66 out of 165. Government representatives, from Denmark, Italy and Sweden, are the second largest group of visitors: 49 persons belonging to this category came to the Foundation's premises in Loughlinstown, south County Dublin.

'The increased number of visitors confirms that our open-door policy works,' comments **Willy Buschak**, the Foundation's acting Director.



Conference centre plays host to Irish EU Presidency

The Raymond-Pierre Bodin conference centre, with a seating capacity of some 120 people and interpretation facilities for nine languages, has played host to many international conferences under the auspices of the current Irish EU Presidency. During the month of May, a total of five international conferences, with between 80-110 participants each, have been held at the Foundation, on issues ranging from poverty to health and safety.

communiqué

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