

# communiqué



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

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## DIRECTOR'S DIARY



Workers in the 10 new EU Member States work on average 112 hours - or almost three working weeks - more per year than workers in the EU15. This is according to the Foundation's European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) in its annual update on working time developments. While collective bargaining still plays a key role in determining the duration of working time in most of the countries in Europe, less than half of all workers in the new Member States are covered by these agreements. While around three-quarters of the EU15 workforce are still covered, the trend across all EU Member States is that of increased decentralisation of collective bargaining. This is a challenge to social dialogue, if current employee protection and participation levels are to be maintained.

This month will see the launch of the newly redesigned Foundation website *Eurofound*. Providing easy access to Foundation research for an average of 160,000 users every month, the new site will also offer one unique gateway to the individual websites of EIRO and the European Monitoring Centre on Change (EMCC). At the same time the Foundation will launch a unique new interactive database of European quality of life indicators. EurLIFE has been built on comparable EU-wide data sources and the Foundation's own monitoring tools on quality of life and working conditions.

**Willy Buschak**  
Acting Director

## IMPORTANT NOTICE

### Register for Communiqué

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or regular post, for additional queries.

## Check out your quality of life!

EurLIFE, an interactive database of quality of life indicators, will be launched next month with the redesigned website, *Eurofound*.

Results from the Foundation's European Quality of Life Survey and other statistical resources will be made available online as part of the new online searchable database EurLIFE. The new instrument, which will allow users to create graphs and tables on the basis of their own requirements, is the most recent information resource to be created by the Foundation and the first such interactive tool to assist the user in charting trends and developments in the living conditions sphere.

Check out the Foundation's new website on [www.eurofound.eu.int](http://www.eurofound.eu.int)

## Much industrial restructuring activity across Europe

While the general trend of job losses due to restructuring continues, job creation in Europe saw a massive increase of more than 62% over the previous three months.

Some 220,000 job losses were announced as a result of 238 restructuring cases during the first three months of the year, representing a 36% increase over the previous quarter, according to the latest report from the Foundation's European Restructuring Monitor, the *ERM quarterly*. The lion's share of the planned job reductions were found in public administration (48%), but also in the transport/communications sector (20%) and manufacturing (17%). Worst hit was the United Kingdom, followed by the Czech Republic, the Netherlands and Denmark. This increase was, at least partially, subdued due to the 63,500 new jobs that were announced during the same period, representing a whopping 62% increase over the previous quarter. Well over half the planned job creations result from expanding business activities in the new Member States.

The report can be downloaded from [www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/erm/](http://www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/erm/)

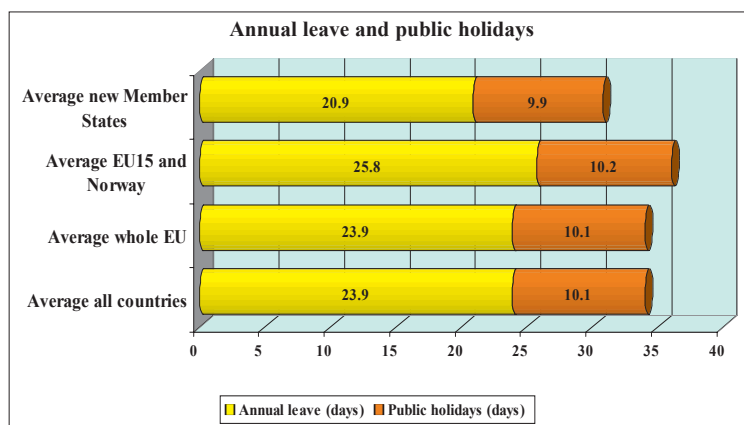
## Research in brief

### Differences in holidays for workers in Europe

Agreed annual leave and public holidays vary hugely across the EU - from 44 days in Sweden to 28 days in Estonia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovenia - a difference of over 50%, or more than three working weeks. Denmark, Germany, Italy, Malta and the Netherlands also

have a high numbers of leave days per year, while other notably low-leave countries include Belgium, Hungary, Ireland and Latvia. The average figure for the EU15 and Norway is 36 days, while that for the new Member States is 30.8. More information can be found on:

[www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2005/03/update/tn0503104u.html](http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/2005/03/update/tn0503104u.html)



Source: EIRO 2005

## Slovenia boasts high levels of life satisfaction and optimism for the future

Slovenes rate their overall life satisfaction higher than the average in the new Member States, Janez Drobnič, the Slovene Minister for Labour, Family and Social Affairs, was told at a briefing in Ljubljana on 23 May. The results also revealed that Slovenia is closer to the quality of life standards in the former EU15 than in the new Member States, with similar levels of economic deprivation and perception of housing standards. However, Slovenes aged 65 and over report lower subjective well-being and somewhat more material deprivation than younger people. The visit was part of the road show presenting the first results of the Foundation's European Quality of Life Survey to all 28 countries surveyed.

More on: [www.eurofound.eu.int/newsroom/presspack/qual\\_life/index.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/newsroom/presspack/qual_life/index.htm)

## Focus on training and employability

Workers with permanent employment contracts are more likely to receive training (35%), which is paid for by the employer, than workers on fixed-term contracts (31%) or temporary agency workers (23%), according to Foundation research. As skills and occupational competencies are fundamental to employability, it is thus more difficult for employees with non-permanent work contracts to make the transition to the regular labour market or access new jobs and opportunities. A Foundation conference, organised in collaboration with the Luxembourg EU Presidency, on 21-22 June will explore this relationship between training and employability, focusing on fixed-term and temporary agency workers and the importance of training for work and for social inclusion.

More information can be found on [www.eurofound.eu.int/ewco](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/ewco)

## Changes in national collective bargaining systems

The decentralisation of collective bargaining processes over the past 15 years might lead to declining levels of coverage, and employee protection and participation, the latest EIRO comparative study argues. The report, which looks at changes in national collective bargaining systems since 1990, shows that two widely different models have emerged. On the one hand is the 'European model' with its strong multi-employer bargaining institutions in the former EU15 countries, characterised by its sectoral or intersectoral bargaining and relatively high bargaining coverage. On the other hand is the 'American model' with its comparatively weak bargaining institutions, which has the company as the predominant bargaining level and low bargaining coverage. This is present in the UK and to a somewhat less extent the new Member States. The report argues that employee protection and participation is at risk if countries do not develop comprehensive collective bargaining systems and that associations and trade unions thus need a supporting legal and political framework to do so.

Read the EIRO report online at [www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/comparativestudies.html](http://www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/comparativestudies.html)

## Promoting productivity and quality of work with workplace innovation

Innovation within companies has traditionally focused on product development and cost saving. However, the emergence of a knowledge economy will require employers and employees to develop new organisational work concepts, which are conducive to continuous learning and innovation across the entire organisation. The next EMCC company network seminar, which will be held in Bologna, Italy, on 27-28 June 2005 and will be co-hosted by the Fondazione Istituto per il Lavoro, will explore the relationship between new work organisational models in companies and their impact on productivity levels and human resources developments. EMCC argues that companies must realise that fostering human creativity, as well as investment in human resources and involving employees in strategic business developments, are key elements in guaranteeing sustainable business success.

More information about this seminar is available on [www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/content/source/eu05006a.html](http://www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/content/source/eu05006a.html)

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### Social dialogue capacity building

7 June 2005, Bucharest, Romania  
Foundation own event

### Work-life development in Europe

17 June 2005, Bonn, Germany  
German Federal Ministry for Education and Research

### MEPs lunch on restructuring

22 June 2005, Brussels, Belgium  
Foundation own event

### Agora 2005: Experience is capital

23-24 June 2005, Paris, France  
DG Employment and French Ministry for Employment

### Road show Ireland

29 June 2005, Dublin, Ireland  
Foundation own event

## PUBLICATIONS

### Annual report 2004: Annexes

EN  
[www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0514.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0514.htm)

### Industrial relations in the EU, Japan and USA, 2003-2004

EN  
[www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0573.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0573.htm)

### Industrial relations in the steel industry (comparative study)

EN  
[www.eurofound.eu.int/comparativestudies.html](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/comparativestudies.html)

### Sector futures: Transport (3) - Policy issues

EN  
[www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/content/source/eu05003a.html](http://www.emcc.eurofound.eu.int/content/source/eu05003a.html)

### Working and living in an enlarged Europe (report)

EN  
[www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0595.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF0595.htm)

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## Publication of the month



Foundation seminar series (Info sheet)

[www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF04139.htm](http://www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/EF04139.htm)