Sustainable work

The role of survey data for evidence-based policymaking on working time in the EU: Experiences and ways forward

*Workshop report*

**Publications series**

*European Working Conditions Survey 2015*
Authors: Sophie Meyer (BAuA), Yolanda Torres Revenga (Eurofound), Anne Marit Wöhrmann (BAuA) and Jorge Cabrita (Eurofound)

Research Managers: Anne Marit Wöhrmann (BAuA) and Jorge Cabrita (Eurofound)

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European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Telephone: (+353 1) 204 31 00
Email: information@eurofound.europa.eu
Web: www.eurofound.europa.eu

The Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) is a federal authority within the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Germany. As a departmental research institution of the Federal Government, it is responsible for all matters involving occupational safety and health at work, including the adjustment of working conditions to human needs.

Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA)
Telephone: (+49 231) 9071-0
Email: poststelle@baua.bund.de
Web: www.baua.de/en

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Preface

Working time has been, and will continue to be, a central concern for both research and policymakers not least because it is linked to many other aspects of work, including workers’ health, work–life balance and productivity, and is also linked more generally to the way society is organised. As such, working time is an important policy issue in all countries tackled through various combinations of national legislation, social dialogue and through collective bargaining. Apart from wages, it is one of the most important subjects dealt with by social partners in their negotiations. For that reason, it is a recurring issue on the political agenda. On the European level, two core rights have been established within the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (2007): First, every worker has the right to working conditions that respect his/her health, safety and dignity and second, every worker has the right to limitation of maximum working hours, daily and weekly rest periods and to an annual period of paid leave. Moreover, the European Pillar of Social Rights, which was proclaimed in November 2017 by the European Parliament, the European Council and the European Commision, contains two principles that underline the importance of working time: principle no. 9, work–life balance, and principle no.10, healthy, safe and well-adapted work environment and data protection. In the context of the changing world of work, new challenges such as increasing flexibility or telework, question these established rights with the current discussion turning on whether the existing working time regulations are sufficient or not.

Within this discussion, having data on working time is equally important for both, researchers and policymakers, in order to ensure an objective debate and to study working time related aspects on a national but also on a European level. Many different data sources can be used in policymaking on working time, such as national statistics, registry data, social security data, health insurance data, pension data or payroll data. Representative survey data on the national or international level, such as Eurofound’s European Working Conditions Survey and the BAuA Working Time Survey, can make important contributions to evidence-based policymaking. Analyses based on survey data allow to put working time in the broader context of working conditions enabling a better understanding of the implications for individuals, organisations and society in general. For instance, studies based on survey data not only focus on the number of working hours but also on how working time is organised and how these aspects relate to other aspects of job quality, for example, work intensity or workers’ work–life balance.

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Collecting these rich data sources and being involved in both research and policy advice, BAuA and Eurofound decided to organise a joint workshop bringing together key actors in the field of working time, i.e. survey producers, researchers and policy-makers, in order to discuss their experiences in using survey data for policy-making on working-time. Specifically, the workshop aimed at increasing the awareness of the value of survey data in policymaking, on developing actions to foster a better use of available data, and how large-scale surveys can address existing and future challenges in working time policymaking.

The workshop revealed the need for a regular exchange between science and policy makers. A prospective science which meets future challenges is needed, and Eurofound’s and BAuA’s surveys provide a possibility for this. As national policy and legislation are framed by EU policies - which is particularly true for working time regulations - the transnational exchanges and discussions are very fruitful.

The current report serves as a documentation of the scope and the results of the expert workshop and provides the main points from each session. The report is targeted at the workshop participants, researchers who are interested in communicating their data/findings to policy makers and social partners who are interested in using national and international survey data for evidence-based policymaking as well as anyone who is interested in the current and future challenges regarding working time policymaking based on survey data.
Scope and course of the expert workshop

The main objective of the workshop was to bring together key actors in survey research and policymaking in the field of working time duration and organisation in order to:

- Discuss the role of survey data for evidence-based policymaking in the EU;
- Increase awareness of the value of survey data sources in policymaking;
- Develop actions to foster better use of available data, improve communication of findings and contribute to better-informed decision-making;
- Identify the most relevant current and future topics for both research and policymaking.

The workshop took place in two half-days, on the 26th and 27th of April, 2018, in Brussels. The first half-day was dedicated to sharing and discussing the experiences of actors from different quadrants – survey producers, researchers and policymakers – in using survey data for working time policymaking. It addressed the strengths and weaknesses of existing national and international surveys and took stock of lessons learned to date. First, large-scale worker surveys dealing with working time – Eurofound’s EWCS and BAuA’s Working Time Survey – were presented and discussed with the participants. Then, the participants had the opportunity to learn from and discuss with four panellists, who shared their experiences with the use of survey data in the working time policymaking context.

The second half-day was forward-looking. The focus was on the main existing and future challenges in working time policymaking and how large-scale surveys can address these. It was highly interactive and allowed participants to reflect on and discuss how to further improve the usage of data and identify the most important issues to be taken into consideration in data collection and analysis in the future. First, the position regarding current and future challenges for working time policymaking at the EU level was presented and discussed. Afterwards, the use of survey data to tackle challenges in working time policymaking was discussed through an interactive activity, which focused on the following themes:

A. Future topics of relevance for policy makers and researchers
B. Consideration of other life domains in working time research and policymaking
C. Cooperation between stakeholders
D. Communication of findings

The workshop was designed so that participants could take away:

- More information on how survey data can contribute to working time policymaking;
- New ideas and perspectives about how to develop, obtain, promote and use survey data for working time policymaking;
- A network of contacts supporting cooperation in the use of survey data in working time policymaking across organisations, institutions and Member States.
The organisers

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound)

Eurofound is an agency of the European Union, established in 1975, whose mission is to provide knowledge to assist in the development of better social, employment and work-related policies. It is a tripartite body, with a Governing Board that represents the social partners and national governments of all Member States, as well as the European Commission. Eurofound’s work focuses on strategic areas of intervention, including working conditions and sustainable work, industrial relations, labour market change and quality of life and public services.

Among Eurofound’s most significant undertakings is the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS). Since its launch in 1990, the EWCS has built up a body of knowledge on many aspects of working conditions in Europe, including working time quality, a crucial element of Eurofound’s job quality analytical framework. Through this framework, the EWCS has helped establish the link between job quality, including working time quality, and the health and well-being of workers.

Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health in Germany (BAuA)

BAuA is a departmental research institution of the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. Based in Dortmund and with departments in Berlin, Dresden and Chemnitz, BAuA evaluates scientific and practical developments within occupational safety and health at work. It advises the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs on all matters relating to health and safety and humane work design. In doing so, BAuA operates at the interface between science and policy and acts as a mediator between the scientific community and the political system, workplace practice and society.

The healthy organisation of working time is one of the key questions in the humane design of the changing world of work. With working time being an important research area for BAuA, the BAuA Working Time Survey was introduced in 2015 as a nationally representative panel survey on working time. Its aim is to present current and representative data on aspects of the organisation of working time and its relation to employee health in order to inform policymaking and regulation related to working time.
Working time in large scale workers’ surveys: Eurofound’s EWCS and BAuA’s Working Time Survey

Chair: Erika Mezger, Deputy Director, Eurofound

Photo: left, Erika Mezger, centre, Anne Marit Wöhrmann, and right, Jorge Cabrita.

Eurofound’s EWCS and working time in Europe

Jorge Cabrita, Research Manager, Eurofound

Eurofound carries out three EU wide surveys: the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS), the European Company Survey (ECS) and the European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) with working time being comprehensively covered, in particular within the EWCS.

The EWCS main objectives are to assess and quantify working conditions of both employees and the self-employed on a harmonised basis and to monitor trends across Europe, as well as to analyse relationships between different aspects of working conditions and identify groups at risk. The EWCS contributes to European policy development in particular with respect to the quality of work and employment issues. The EWCS is also an appropriate data source to analyse job quality. Eurofound’s framework of job quality has seven dimensions, all of which can be measured using EWCS data: physical environment, social environment, work intensity, skills and discretion, working time quality, prospects and earnings.

The latest edition, the sixth European Working Conditions Survey, was carried out in 2015 and included 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: a total of 35 countries, making this wave the most comprehensive one so far in terms of number of countries covered. It contained 106 questions, encompassing more than 200 items. The interviews were done face-to-face at the worker’s home and took 45 minutes.
on average. The questionnaire was translated into 49 language versions to cater for all the most relevant possibilities across the countries. Among other aspects, working time is comprehensively measured within the EWCS. For each wave, Eurofound tries to include new questions to capture new phenomena and trends. The sixth wave also included a ‘mini-time-budget questionnaire’ including information about time use on commuting, house work, caring work (children/grandchildren and elderly/disabled relatives) and preferences over working time of the partner. Currently, Eurofound is working on the questionnaire for 2020 and considering the scope to address ‘new’ issues such as workers at the margins (freelancers, mini-jobs, performing multi-activities, etc.), digitalisation or blurring frontiers between work and other domains of life. The questionnaire, data and methodology are freely available from Eurofound’s website which also offers data exploration using the survey mapping tool.

Eurofound is a tripartite agency and social partners are always involved. Each time the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) is in the planning, the questionnaire is revised with the support of experts and policy actors, and the guidance of Eurofound’s stakeholders.

**EWCS’s contribution to policymaking**

Eurofound’s contributions to policymaking are various. They include contributions to some European Commission documents pertaining to the European Pillar of Social Rights, such as the Initiative to support work–life balance for working parents and carers, the proposal for a Council Recommendation on access to social protection for workers and the self-employed, and the Proposal for a Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions. Eurofound also contributes to policy developments through participation in the work of other EU institutions and bodies (for example, European Parliament, informal EPSCO, Employment Committee (EMCO), Social Protection Committee (SPC), European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), European Committee of the Regions (CoR), other EU agencies, etc.) as well as social partners. Eurofound was invited to the Gothenburg Social Summit, where the EU Institutions proclaimed the European Pillar of Social Rights. The Summit followed immediately after Eurofound’s four-yearly Foundation Forum, attended by Swedish Minister Johannsson, who publicly welcomed the Forum as a contribution to the Gothenburg Summit.

Presentation: [EWCS and working time in Europe - Jorge Cabrita](#)

More about: [European Working Conditions Surveys (EWCS)](#)

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BAuA’s Working Time Survey
Anne Marit Wöhrmann, Project Manager, BAuA

The BAuA-Working Time Survey was established in 2015 and designed as a panel survey currently being carried out every two years. Its main purpose is a continuous working time reporting that is representative of employees in Germany. The data allow giving an overview of working time reality in Germany and its development over time. Also, they enable to analyse relationships between various facets of working time and employees’ health and satisfaction in a short and long-term perspective.

The first wave was carried out in 2015 and surveyed 20,030 employees by Computer Assisted Telephone Interviews (CATI) in cooperation with a specialized institute with an average interview duration of 35 min. The survey covers employees aged 15 and older in Germany with a weekly working time of at least 10 hours in the main job. The second wave took place in 2017 with 10,459 people being interviewed (7446 participants from the first wave and 3013 new participants). The third wave of data collection will take place in 2019. The topics cover many facets of working time: working time duration, working time flexibility, working place flexibility (new module in 2017 on commuting, etc.), working time variability and constant availability, work-life balance, as well as work location.

The questionnaire also addresses other aspects of employment and organisation characteristics, physical as well as psychological working conditions, health, well-being and satisfaction as well as further jobs and socio-demographics. BAuA is currently preparing a scientific use file to make the data available. To date, data can be analysed on site at BAuA, and BAuA also carries out analysis as part of cooperation with other stakeholders.

BAuA’s Working Time Survey’s contribution to policymaking

The Working Time Survey is an important source for analyses implemented in various types of publications by BAuA, such as monitoring reports, short reports, research reports and practical guides. Scientifically sound analyses are used proactively to advise policy makers. Additionally, BAuA also receives direct requests from the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs to carry out special analyses (increasingly to working time issues), for example in order to support the Ministry in answering parliamentary questions. Moreover, data from the BAuA-Working Time Survey were available when a huge debate on working time in Germany came up. Thus, when BAuA issued the report in 2016, various stakeholders, particularly trade unions and ministries were interested in the results.

Presentation: BAuA’s Working Time Survey – Anne Marit Wöhrmann
More about: BAuA’s Working Time Survey
Experiences with the use of survey data in the working time policymaking context
Chair: Barbara Gerstenberger, Head of Unit, Working Life, Eurofound

The panellists

Irene Houtman, Senior Researcher, Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO)

Dominique Anxo, Director, Centre for European Labour Market Studies (CELMS), Sweden

Isabelle Barthès, Senior Policy Advisor, industriAll

Juha Antila, Head of Research and Development, Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions (SAK), Finland

Irene Houtman and her colleagues at TNO do lots of research on different aspects of working time for policy makers. Their analyses are largely based on survey data. She emphasized that existing data sets should be better exploited. For example, different sets of data could be linked: survey data could be linked to register data (though it is impossible in some countries due to data protection laws) or to macro level data, such as national structural or sector specific data. Additionally, she stressed the potential of qualitative data in order to identify emerging risks and to develop (new) survey questions.

Dominique Anxo highlighted the uniqueness of the EWCS in order to compare working time across countries and explore associations with institutional regulations and policies. He presented empirical evidence that showed that working time distributions appear to be much more polarized in countries with weak regulations or market-based regulations, concluding that institutions do matter. He also pointed out that long-term panel data is needed in order to undertake (policy) impact assessments as problems relating to statistical inference, selection effects or reverse causality occur with cross-sectional data.

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**Isabelle Barthès** revealed that working time is back on the European agenda, and is a priority issue for trade unions especially in the manufacturing sector. In this context, having ‘neutral’ and ‘unbiased’ data is important to enter the discussions with employers. Comparisons across Europe are fundamental in particular in highly competitive sectors where employers always look at the situation in the neighbouring countries. Moreover, she pointed to the growing concern about long actual working hours but also to the debate on using working time to ensure employment (for example, through short-time work, which was used during the financial crisis).

**Juha Antila** mentioned two issues that are currently of particular importance in his context: First, there is a growing debate on the duration of working time with the polarization between long and short working hours or the discussion on zero-hour contracts. Second, the debate relates to the flexibility of working time and autonomy. He underlined that survey data are needed to gather reliable information on these issues (among others) for tripartite negotiations. Also, he pleaded to link different datasets to combine information from the employee and employer sides.

**Main points of the panel-discussion**

The panel discussion delivered valuable insights on the future challenges of survey data collection on working time and what could be done to improve the hand-in-hand work between researchers and policymaking.

One focus of the discussion revolved around the challenges that arise in the context of demographic change, digitalisation and related issues such as the gig economy or mobile workers as well as increasing flexibility of working time. The experts also pointed to the increasing importance of working time in the context of an ageing workforce. Working time arrangements should be adaptable to different life stages as well as to individual needs regarding the design of boundaries between the work and private life domain. Further, it was discussed that it becomes increasingly difficult to measure working time and to ensure that people stick not only to their contractually agreed number of working hours but also to the 11 hours rest period.

Based on those issues, the discussion also evolved around how to enrich survey data in different ways. For example, time-use surveys might become more prominent in the future as they allow capturing the flow of working time. The experts also agreed upon the importance to do more sector-level analyses, for example, by making an effort to combine information from different data sources. These analyses are of great value not least against the background of local bargaining and as working time schedules largely vary across sectors. Further, qualitative data, such as cognitive interviews should be complementarily collected in order to get deeper into relationships or mechanisms and being able to identify emerging issues and potential risks at an early stage.
Against the background of emerging phenomena in the current world of work it was mentioned that clear and agreed definitions, for example, regarding telework, are essential in order to implement these (new) issues in surveys and to ensure comparability across surveys. Further methodological issues in the context of collecting survey data were raised – for example, ways to increase the response rate and motivate people to participate (especially in panel surveys) as well as the ideal frequency of collecting survey data given the trade-off between having recent data for policy and budget constraints.
Working time policymaking in the EU: current and future challenges - the European Commission’s perspective

Chair: Anita Tisch, Head of Unit Changing World of Work, BAuA
Marie Lagarrigue, Deputy Head, Working Conditions Unit, DG Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, European Commission

Nowadays, the Commission is more than ever committed to evidence-based policy, and survey data have a key role to play. Survey data such as Eurofound’s EWCS, which is ‘much richer than national surveys’, have been central in supporting the Commission’s work in relation to the implementation of the Working Time Directive.

The Working Time Directive has been around since the 1990s and is anchored in the Charter of the Fundamental Rights. It sets a number of key minimum requirements on maximum weekly working time (48 hours in average), minimum rest time (11 hours a day, one day a week) and paid holidays (4 weeks a year), among others. It also provides several possible derogations to ease the organisation of activities such as those requiring continuity of service.

Between 2004 and 2016, various initiatives were attempted to revise the Directive, including a proposal for a revised Directive discussed in Parliament and Council, and negotiations between the EU social partners. However, these attempts failed and ended with an in-depth review process. The conclusion was that the Directive remains a relevant instrument, without ignoring that a number of challenges exist as to its implementation. That was the main reason for the Commission to adopt the Interpretative Communication on Directive 2003/88/EC (following up on the European Pillar of Social Rights), which provides guidance on how to interpret various aspects of this directive, which will help Member States implement the acquis correctly and avoid further infringements. An Implementation report complemented the Interpretative Communication, and together they formed a ‘comprehensive basis for concrete work towards stepped up enforcement of the Directive in the Member States.’
Currently the main institutional efforts are primarily made to ensure the best implementation possible of the Directive. Case law evolves in parallel, also raising enforcement challenges.

‘Both for enforcement and policy reflection, we need evidence and this is where survey data comes into play.’

In comparison to institution-based data or statistics, the added value of survey based data lies in its flexibility. Surveys are not only able to capture trends that may be impossible to see in other types of evidence but they can also more easily adapt to those trends. There are new challenges emerging, such as the issue of predictability, and evidence-based research that keeps track of trends play a crucial role. This is even more important as measurement of working time is only part of the policy concerns: ‘we shall also understand in more subtle details what the nature of working time is, and how it is organised in practice.’

Definitions are very important (for example, the definitions of ‘on-call’ and ‘stand-by time’) and in this respect court cases can be important. In the Matzak case, for instance, the ECJ has interpreted that stand-by time which a worker spends at home with the duty to respond to calls from his employer within 8 minutes, very significantly restricting the opportunities for other activities, must be regarded as ‘working time’. For the Commission it is also essential that the data can be disaggregated to match the personal scope of the Directive, which is applicable solely to employees (but not self-employed workers). Because there are also specific populations such as autonomous workers, which are subject to derogations, it is important to have a way to capture them correctly.

In terms of future policy needs, the main context is that the working time directive will remain a Health and Safety instrument. In that context it is important to:

- Keep track of trends in work organisation that might be on the rise, such as on-call and stand-by time. How to best capture all types of working time? This is becoming increasingly difficult with the blurring frontiers between work and private life.
- Better understand working time in the new forms of employment, irregular working time patterns and how the working time Directive fits in this development. What is the influence of extremely ‘fractioned’ working time, or multiple places of work, or mobile work, or working for several employers?
- See whether the minimum daily rest period of 11 consecutive hours in every 24 (Article 3), as per the directive, is enough regarding work-life balance purposes.

In that context, the importance of the work done by Eurofound and BAuA through their surveys was highlighted by Marie Lagarrigue:

‘I can only conclude by reaffirming how much your work is important for us. The wealth of evidence that you can bring is precious to us both to understand where shortcomings may be in the implementation of the current Directive and to get a sense of future challenges that may require new policy steps. Because it comes from the people...’
Main points of discussion

What kind of liability is there if the daily 11-hour rest period is not taken (derogated)?

Marie Lagarrigue said that the Directive contains certain derogations where the daily 11 hours- rest period (see Article 17 / 18 of the directive) can be derogated from, for example, in the case of activities involving the need for continuity of service such as in a hospital. It is therefore necessary to provide certain provisions in the event of a derogation, where the workers concerned must be given equivalent compensatory rest periods.

Jorge Cabrita (Eurofound) mentioned that the Commission’s Implementation report showed that in some Member States, categories of workers were excluded from the scope of the legislation. In the public sector this is most commonly the case for the armed forces, police, and other security forces, and also for civil protection services such as prison staff and public service firefighters.

How could new phenomena be researched if these had not been yet defined, for instance ‘platform work’?

Marie Lagarrigue agreed that that was in fact a challenge. In any case, she mentioned Eurofound’s definition of platform work. Barbara Gerstenberger (Eurofound) added that Eurofound was currently further working on platform work and will shortly come out with developments in terms of definition and typologies. Anita Tisch (BAuA) also commented that some countries may have different definitions for that phenomenon and that prevalences vary substantially across countries.

What is the usefulness of quantitative and qualitative data and whether quantitative data were useful if qualitative data is not possible to obtain?

Marie Lagarrigue replied that personally she would prefer qualitative data, but sometimes quantitative data is used, even if it is not capturing the whole story. In fact, to reply this question, she emphasized that there was a need for both quantitative and qualitative data, i.e. reliable, comparable data and the qualitative analysis. DG EMPL tries to limit quantification, but it is not always possible.

A participant remarked that research on opt-out clauses, where employers have to keep up-to-date records of all workers who carry out work outside of the scope of the Directive, and the links to workers’ health has been performed in Finland over 10 years, in the public service sector. However, because workers have to electronically record the working time – which would make it easier to follow the impact on workers -, and the data are not always available,
it is difficult to have solid research. Clock-in and clock-out data could be useful, where it exists, but the comparability of data among countries must be tested.

Another participant added that the Directive allows for derogations through collective agreement (Article 18 Derogations by collective agreements from Articles 3 (daily rest period), 4 (breaks), 5 (weekly rest period), 8 (length of night work) and 16 (reference periods)) and suggested that Eurofound could structure the discussion with even further research on this issue. Jorge Cabrita (Eurofound) mentioned that although Eurofound does not report on this issue systematically, it monitors major developments through the EurWORK observatory updates. The availability of data on the use of opt-out clauses of the Directive is limited hindering the comparison between Member States.
Discussion tables – using survey data to tackle challenges in working time policymaking

Co-Moderators/Facilitators: Anne Marit Wöhrmann, BAuA, and Jorge Cabrita, Eurofound

All participants took part in group discussions about four different topics, in four different tables, each hosted by a different moderator. Every participant took part in a 20 minutes group discussion on each topic on the basis of some guiding questions as indicated below.

Table A: Future topics of relevance for policy makers and researchers

Moderator: Greet Vermeylen, Policy Officer, EC DG Justice

Guiding questions

- Against current developments (societal changes, global developments, changing world of work, etc.) which topics related to working time will become increasingly relevant for policymaking and research?
- Which topics related to working time are currently under-researched or just emerging and should be further investigated?
- What will be the challenges for a health-promoting design of working time in the upcoming years?

Main points of discussion

There is a need to consider two different kinds of challenges while reflecting on working time challenges nowadays. On the one hand, there is the impact of new phenomena (such as robotisation, new technologies and digitisation) on traditional ways of working. On the other hand, there are new ways of work (for example, new types of contracts) that have certain
specificities in terms of working time. In this context, several aspects are currently gaining importance, including:

- Voluntary vs. involuntary flexibility in working time;
- Impact of and regulation of flexibility (predictability, anticipation);
- Vulnerable groups (for example, zero hour contracts, mini-jobs, in-work poverty, etc.)

The main points of discussion included:

- **Heterogeneity with respect to the quality of work**: ‘eight hours are not eight hours’, meaning that the number of working hours must be seen in the context of other (new or changing) working conditions, such as work intensity, productivity or technology used. Technology can be both an enabler and/or a risk regarding the ability to cope with changing demands such as disruptions or digital/technological noise, which are becoming increasingly important. The proliferation of knowledge work and robotisation can lead to complications especially for certain groups of workers.

- **Autonomy** over working time: is it always an asset? Blurring boundaries between work and private life, self-exploitation and (self-) protection of workers are issues to explore in this context. Who is responsible? The individual? The employer?

- **Increasing variability and individualisation** involve various different working time patterns. Need to explore how the different rhythms of work influence the workers’ health also with respect to the (fragmentation of) recovery time and annualisation of working time (i.e. derogations to some articles in the Directive within a reference period not exceeding 12 months).

- **Regarding workers with multiple jobs**, there is a difficulty with respect to the maximum weekly working time/daily and weekly rest: Counting the working hours per worker or per contract? Platform work might also be a second job (if considered as self-employed: not covered by the EU Working Time Directive)

- **Who is responsible** to ensure the health and safety of workers in terms of working time? The employer? Given the increasing flexibility this issue becomes much more complex.

- Taking on a **life course perspective** when researching working time issues might gain in importance against the background of longer working lives and the debate regarding work-life balance.

- **More research** (not necessarily more data) is needed, for example, evaluation research. Different sources of data might also be relevant (service data, medical data, qualitative and quantitative data, also between sectors and occupations).

- **Policymaking must be evidence-based!**
Table B: Consideration of other life domains in working time research and policymaking

Moderator: Colette Fagan, Vice-President for Research, University of Manchester, United Kingdom

Guiding questions

- To what extent is it sensible / necessary to take other life domains into consideration in working time research and policymaking?
- Which aspects could or should be taken into account (for example, aspects of mobility, voluntary work, household composition, childcare, elderly care)?
- Which are further relevant topics regarding the non-work domains of life that are typically not considered in national survey data but are very relevant for policymaking and / or the societal debate?

Main points of discussion

The need to take other life domains into consideration in working time research and policymaking was not even questioned, indicating its crucial role. Similarly to Table A, the discussions at Table B also highlighted that old domains/traditional topics of work are still relevant, although they partially appear with a slightly different ‘packaging’ which turns them into new domains. In this context, the participants mentioned several issues:

- Intergenerational issues like childcare, elder care, grandparents taking care of grandchildren or pension;
- Digital surveillance and privacy, such as micro-chips or GPS embedding;
- **Volunteering** or unpaid work for civic duties in general, and whether it becomes more important in a changing world of work;
- **Commuting** and related issues such as class inequalities, digital issues (lack of broadband in rural areas) professional choice and long commuting hours.

These issues were also discussed against the background of **blending or blurring borders** regarding multitasking and reconciling family, work and other life domains. Although this is not new and many people have always done it, it takes on a different shape in a digital world, also when there is a diverse range of people in the workplace and in jobs that are changing.

Related to this and in the context of **the changing world of work** it was discussed what this potentially means for working time issues, raising the following points:

- The whole **digital space** (involving artificial intelligence, robots and co-working with machines, end of work scenarios and digital platforms) and how all this invades all areas of employment, including (the predictability of) working time;
- The role of **trade unions**: there is a decrease in collective representation in a number of sectors. Simultaneously, new sectors that have no tradition of collective organisation come up, such as millennial start-up companies with different values and priorities. How can unions move into this space and set standards/regulations?
- If work is changing over the life course, how to bring a **working time/welfare policy** to this new world of change?

In relation to these overall headlines/broader issues, various further/future topics have been discussed as well:

- **New methods** to capture working time (complementary to working conditions surveys) such as time-use surveys (for example, via diaries or smartphone apps) might become increasingly important in order to understand time allocation and sequencing or multitasking. Big data analytics and linked data might also be useful to better understand/measure working time, complementing survey data.
- **Prolonged working lives** and how to create sustainable work over the life cycle, especially for older workers or for people with chronic conditions or health issues. In this context, the personal development involving long-life learning/training is also relevant.
- **Working time preferences** might be changing with issues like sabbatical time, time-sharing, working time reduction, which are becoming increasingly important. How does this impact work processes and the coordination of flexible working time arrangements? How to get a win-win ‘alignment’ for employer and employee?
Table C: Cooperation between stakeholders

Moderator: Sebastian Schief, Senior Lecturer, Fribourg University, Switzerland

Guiding questions

- How do policy makers request or demand scientific knowledge for evidence-based policies (Public procurement, cooperation with academia, publicly funded projects)?
- How could cooperation between researchers and policy makers look like in the future? What can be done to improve it?
- What are the hindering and enabling factors of cooperation between different stakeholders (for example, knowledge and understanding of the ‘other side’, trust, risk of loss of credibility through use of statements of researchers in politics; presentation in the media, scientific vs. political language, clarity, etc.)?
- Are more direct contacts necessary? At what level (national, international)? How do indirect relationships work?

Main points of discussion

The discussions at Table C emphasized that the cooperation between stakeholders - between researchers and policymakers in particular - involves several difficulties, including, for instance, expectations of finding quick answers to current debates in a context of increasing (main budgetary) restraints. More specifically, the following issues have been raised and discussed by the participants regarding the (improvement) of the cooperation between stakeholders:
Operational framework

- Need of objective long-term research production requires long-term infrastructures for applied policy research
- **Long-term planned research** and analysis of **existing research questions** at short notice **have to be reconciled**
- **Contradiction between researchers and policymakers** concerning roles, possibilities and working structure indicates some sort of misunderstanding between research/academia and policymaking that requires clarification or reconciliation

Restraints, proactivity and competition

- **Research needs space for forward thinking** and has a responsibility to do **proactive** research
- Difficulties to match long-term research and analysis of existing research questions with the demand of policy makers, who normally need answers rapidly, within short notice. This would require **compromises and management of the different expectations**.
- To overcome these problems, **stakeholders / policymakers could be involved within the planning of the research.** This also raises the question of who pays for the research. If policymakers ‘pay’ for the research, do they decide what kind of research has to be done?
- There is growing **competition** in research: there are more and more ‘consultants’ who are in the business of making ‘quick and dirty’ instead of properly made research.

Interpreting research and the role of the media

- Does solid research needs interpretation to make the messages clear regarding complex issues such as relating working time to other issues? Research ‘offers’ arguments for political debate. In addition to interpretations offered by researchers themselves, the link may also be to use a political party institute/think-tank to interpret the research for the party members. In any case, exchanges with policy makers are important to forecast relevant topics.
- Importance to ensure unbiased but not oversimplified communication of the results/data to avoid misinterpretation by media/public.

Democracy

- Technocracy vs. democracy: there is a theory saying that good technocracy with evidence-based knowledge would be better in governing a state than democracy. The main problems discussed with respect to this theory were: majority vs. protection of minorities (violation of basic rights), the legitimacy of the system, as well as the right to autonomy (what working time rights are basic rights?)
- There are different ways of policymaking but ensuring informed citizens equals better democracy. What are the possibilities of researchers to better reach the citizens?
Other issues

- Stakeholders cherry-picking the results that fit best to their purposes or ideology.
- Objectivity: in what way does it exist? There are results showing different/opposing findings. Transparency of analysis is important to be as objective as possible.
- Role of comparative research: it is important for a Member State to look at other Member States on how they perform; how others apply certain legislation, etc. However, sometimes research findings suggest that certain practices might not be transferable.
**Guiding questions**

- Do researchers have the competencies to communicate findings in an appropriate way or are people with other skill sets better placed to break down the scientific results and to convey these to policy makers and society?
- Should research findings be targeted at policy makers directly or first to society at large to fuel a more general debate?
- How should research present findings to ensure they are best placed and at the forefront of societal and political debates vis-a-vis visibility, recognition, etc.?
- What are the communication requirements and preferences of policymakers and what formats are most helpful (for example, one-pager, longer reports, data tables, fireside chats or other)?
- Do researchers have the competencies to communicate findings appropriately or are people with other skill sets better placed to convey the research finding to policy makers and the general society?

**Main points of discussion**

The discussions at Table D pointed out that the main framework is the *culture of research*. Similarly to Table C, the financial and time constrains were emphasized raising the questions of who finances the research and who sets the agenda. The differences between ‘academic’ and ‘policy oriented research’, for instance, have been mentioned, as it might also be a matter of attitude regarding the importance of communicating research findings. *Researchers at university* have higher degrees of freedom and the career path (depending on long-term research and publishing in referenced journals) is much more important partly leading to a kind of resistance and constraints in presenting delicate findings. In contrast, for *applied*...
Researchers the communication of findings is much more important as part of their roles. Besides these two different cultures the risk that consultancy businesses are taking the space has also been discussed.

Moreover, the discussion was on specific needs in order to improve the communication of findings:

1. **Training on communication** but also on policy-making processes is important for both individual researchers and institutions. This kind of training should begin at a very early stage of a researcher’s career. In contrast, the question was raised on whether every researcher needs to have the skill to communicate or whether having a communication specialist who transfers the findings to the policy audience might be sufficient.

2. **Skills to explain the data** (also in direct contact) and simplifying although not oversimplifying results, especially concerning complex issues. Often, very short information is needed although it is based on extensive work.

3. Importance of **knowing the stakeholders and target group**, i.e. informing the right person at the right level in the right way (adapting the content to the specific target group) also against the background of stakeholder’s time constraints. Different formats are needed for different stakeholders (for example, Member of European Parliament, social partners, etc.).

4. **Understanding the needs of policymaking** and the decision making process – not just regarding communication but also by making an impact using the right angle-selling point of the research results to policy makers.

5. Communication and **clarifying the priorities** from the beginning of the project which might also be helpful in the research process.

In order to meet the needs, several tools were mentioned:

1. Regular exchange with policy makers: Informal/direct exchanges with policy makers in their own national language
2. Brief reports
3. Platforms for communication (for example, there is a Finnish platform where all the experts from different institutions come together and place their work on certain topics such as occupational safety and health)
4. Network of researchers: Importance to know the experts on the topics.
5. Newspapers/social media
6. New ways of presenting findings/data (for example, in an entertaining way): social media, podcasts, videos, data tools such as survey mapping tools, visualization graphics, etc.
Concluding remarks

The main objective of the workshop of bringing together key actors in survey research and policymaking in the field of working time and discuss the role of surveys - such as Eurofound’s EWCS and BAuA’s Working Time Survey - and how to improve the use of data and the communication of findings for evidence-based policymaking was largely achieved. Throughout two half days the participants had the chance to share their experiences and expertise, exchange ideas, and identify, collectively, some of the most relevant topics and challenges for survey research and policymaking on working time in the EU.

Survey data on working time are important for various reasons. Among the most important is the fact that it satisfies stakeholders’ (governments, social partners and other institutions) needs to explore and analyse data through comparisons across the EU Member States in order to help them to take better informed decisions and devise suitable policies and measures. These comparisons are still fundamental at national, sectoral and local/company level, where actors look at neighbouring countries/sectors/companies in search for benchmarks or even inspiration to solve concrete problems. Concomitantly, surveys are important to collect data and inform (tripartite) negotiations on issues such as flexibility of working time, workers’ autonomy over working time, long vs short hours and zero-hours contracts.

During the workshop, it became very clear that the definitions of concepts used are of crucial importance to make better use of survey data, especially in an international context. Common, agreed and shared definitions are crucial to ensure comparability across surveys. Some examples of concepts mentioned in this context were ‘telework’, ‘on-call’, ‘stand-by time’ or (being called into work at) ‘short-notice’. More broadly, the main methodological issues raised were about how to increase surveys’ response rates and how to motivate people to participate (especially in panel surveys). The ideal frequency of collecting survey data was also questioned within the difficult trade-off between having the most recent data and knowledge for policymaking while dealing with tighter and tighter budget constraints.

The impact of new phenomena - such as robotisation, digitalisation, etc. – on old ways of working and the implications of new ways of working (zero-hour or ‘if and when’ contracts, for example) in terms of working time are the two main issues of relevance for the near future identified in the workshop. In the study and assessment of those implications the ‘heterogeneity’ in quality of work must be considered because ‘eight hours are not eight hours’. In other words, working hours must be understood in the context of other working conditions such as work intensity, autonomy, variability, etc.

Research and policymaking on working time must take into consideration other domains of life as well. The participants highlighted that old domains or traditional topics are still important although they appear ‘wrapped’ in slightly different ways. Intergenerational issues such as childcare or eldercare are still relevant nowadays as is the time available for activities of volunteering or other civic duties. Perhaps more contemporary are the issues related to digital surveillance and privacy (for example, through micro-chips or embedded GPS), and commuting in a context of increased urbanisation.

Although indispensable, the cooperation between research and policymaking in the domain of working time is not free from difficulties. For example, while there are increasing resource
restraints (particularly budgetary) to carry out surveys and research, there are also large expectations of finding quick answers to current problems or issues, which may end in somewhat superficial research. However, there are ways of overcoming those difficulties. The promotion of long-term infrastructures for applied policy research or ensuring the involvement of all stakeholders in the planning of surveys and research, are just some of them.

Research only becomes truly useful if properly communicated. The workshop participants distinguished between ‘academic’ and ‘policy oriented research’ as having different purposes and therefore different attitudes in terms of communication of findings. In that context, the main needs in terms of communication identified were training in communication and on policymaking for individual researchers and institutions, including training aiming at improving skills to explain the data, increase knowledge about main stakeholders and target groups and understanding the policymaking processes. In order to meet those needs, a number of tools were identified, including: regular exchange with policymakers, networks of researchers, and (‘new’) platforms and ways of presenting findings/data (social media, podcasts, survey mapping tools, etc.).

Working time will continue to feature on the European agenda in the near future. Working time is important in a context of globalization, demographic change and digitization, in which societies are increasingly reflecting about how to optimise the allocation of a scarce resource such as time, accommodating both the needs of workplace and the needs of the individuals and their households. While it is becoming increasingly difficult to measure working time, it is also recognised that working time arrangements must be adapted to the needs of people in different life stages and according to different (household) circumstances. It is in this ever-changing context that survey data, together with other sources of data, will continue to be of great value, if not indispensable, for characterising those changes and help devise the most appropriate policies and measures to tackle the upcoming challenges.
Participants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Country</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Juha Antila</td>
<td>Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions, (SAK)</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timo Anttila</td>
<td>University of Jyväskylä</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominique Anxo</td>
<td>Centre for European Labour Market Studies (CEMS)</td>
<td>Sweden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nils Backhaus</td>
<td>BAuA</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Isabelle Barthès</td>
<td>industriAll</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jorge Cabrita</td>
<td>Eurofound</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hendrik Delagrange</td>
<td>Social and Economic Council Flanders</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friederike Ditzen</td>
<td>Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, (BMAS)</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colette Fagan</td>
<td>University of Manchester</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara Gerstenberger</td>
<td>Eurofound</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Grgic</td>
<td>DG Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, European Commission</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mikko Härmä</td>
<td>Finnish Institute of Occupational Health (FIOH) (FI)</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veit Hartmann</td>
<td>Institut fur angewandte Arbeitwissenschaft</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stefanie Herber</td>
<td>Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, (BMAS)</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irene Houtman</td>
<td>Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO)</td>
<td>The Netherlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie Lagarrigue</td>
<td>DG Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, European Commission</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne Lott</td>
<td>Hans-Böckler-Stiftung</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maija Lylly-Yrjänäinen</td>
<td>Ministry of Employment and the Economy</td>
<td>Finland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophie Meyer</td>
<td>BAuA</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Erika Mezger</td>
<td>Eurofound</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nathalie Sauvegrain</td>
<td>Eurofound</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sebastian Schief</td>
<td>Fribourg University</td>
<td>Switzerland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Roland Schneider</td>
<td>TU Consult</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giacomo Spanu</td>
<td>Eurocities</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anita Tisch</td>
<td>BAuA</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yolanda Torres</td>
<td>Eurofound</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernice Turner</td>
<td>Eurofound</td>
<td>Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monika Velikonja</td>
<td>DG Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, European Commission</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greet Vermeulen</td>
<td>DG Justice, European Commission</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Voigtländer</td>
<td>Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, (BMAS)</td>
<td>Germany</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pierre Walthery</td>
<td>University of Oxford</td>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne Marit Wöhrmann</td>
<td>BAuA</td>
<td>Germany</td>
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The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (Eurofound) is a tripartite European Union Agency, whose role is to provide knowledge in the area of social, employment and work-related policies. Eurofound was established in 1975 by Council Regulation (EEC) No. 1365/75, to contribute to the planning and design of better living and working conditions in Europe.

The Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (BAuA) is a federal authority within the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Germany. As a departmental research institution of the Federal Government, it is responsible for all matters involving occupational safety and health at work, including the adjustment of working conditions at work.