

communiqué



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

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DIRECTOR'S DIARY

European workers satisfied with work–life balance

The latest *European Working Conditions Survey* found that four out of five workers (80%) say they are satisfied with their work–life balance. However, more than two in five persons (44%) who work long hours – over 48 hours a week – report being unhappy with their work–life balance. The survey found that men, particularly working fathers, report more dissatisfaction with their work–life balance than women.

Standard working hours are still the norm for most workers in Europe. In the 25 EU Member States and the two EU acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, working hours for the majority of the workforce revolve around a five-day, 40-hour week. Over 55% of all workers work the same number of hours every day, and over 70% work the same number of days every week. The proportion of people working non-standard hours (working at night or at weekends) has fallen slightly since 1995.

In the coming month, the Foundation will present the first findings from its flagship survey, the fourth *European Working Conditions Survey*. Also in November, the third Foundation Forum will take place over three days in Dublin Castle, with close to 200 participants, including 11 Ministers from around Europe and the world. The debates will focus on the compatibility or otherwise of the European social model with the pressure for increased productivity in today's society.

Jorma Karppinen
Director

Working conditions in Europe – what workers say

European workers are satisfied with their working conditions, mainly on account of improved job security, a positive working atmosphere and good opportunities to learn and develop, the first findings of the fourth *European Working Conditions Survey* indicate. However, working conditions vary considerably between individual Member States, between the 'old' and 'new' Member States and also between sectors and women and men in different age groups.

The services sector continues to grow in importance in the European labour market, employing around 66% of workers in the 25 EU Member States and in Bulgaria and Romania, the two EU acceding countries. The percentage of workers employed in both manufacturing and agriculture continues to decline: manufacturing now accounts for 29% of employment and agriculture just 5%. The proportion of workers who use computers at least a quarter of the time in Europe has increased from 31% in 1991 to 47% in 2005. There is still a large proportion of EU workers who do not use computers at work at all (44%). In this respect, the difference between workers who never use computers in the former EU15 countries (42%) and the 10 new Member States (60%) is striking.

'These first results from the European Working Conditions Survey show that although there is real scope for increasing productivity in Europe, policymakers are continuously challenged to reach the goals of improved employment levels and quality of work as laid out in the Lisbon criteria,' says **Jorma Karppinen**, the Foundation's director. 'A majority of European workers report that work is interesting and offers new opportunities to learn, but access to training has not increased, particularly not among older workers, which indicates a deficit in lifelong learning'.

Read more at www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/communiqué/2006/nov/newsletter2.htm

Research highlights low level of EU mobility

Only 4% of EU citizens have ever moved to another country in the EU and less than 3% to another country outside the EU, according to the Foundation's latest publication, *Mobility in Europe*. While European policy stresses the importance of mobility, the research findings point to a very low level of mobility overall in recent times.

Geographical mobility is generally perceived as a 'good thing' for European integration by a solid majority of 62% of respondents, according to research findings documented in the report. Most people also view it as a good thing for the labour market and the economy generally, as well as for the individual. However, Europeans generally view geographical mobility as having a negative impact on families. While people believe that changing their place of residence would be good for European society at large, they do not feel that this would be a desirable action at an individual level.

Read more at www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/communiqué/2006/nov/newsletter3.htm

NEWS IN PICTURES

Marjaana Valkonen, outgoing deputy chair of the Foundation's Governing Board and long-time head of the Workers' group, received flowers and gifts at the 76th meeting of the Governing Board, to mark her retirement from all Foundation duties. Marjaana Valkonen has been a member of the Administrative Board since 1995, serving as chair from 1997–1998 and deputy chair since 1998.



Off-shoring from eastern Europe

While most cases of offshoring recorded in the European Restructuring Monitor Quarterly are from western European countries, the latest ERM *quarterly* (autumn 2006) focuses on companies from eastern Europe which move their production to outside the European Union. According to research, off-shoring from eastern Europe amounts to 9% of all reported off-shored jobs in the 25 EU Member States, plus Bulgaria, Romania and Norway. The ERM *quarterly* found evidence that some of the outsourced jobs in eastern Europe are being replaced with higher skilled jobs. It also reports that the sectoral breakdown of offshored jobs from eastern Europe is different to that of other countries covered by the ERM. The labour intensive textiles and leather sector accounts for 33.6% of offshored eastern European jobs, followed by the electrical sector at 30%. By contrast, the sectoral breakdown for all countries covered by the ERM shows motor and financial services on top (about 15% each), followed by metal and machinery (about 12%), electrical (about 10%) and chemical (about 7%).

Changes in the Foundation's Governing Board

At the Foundation's 76th meeting of its Governing Board on 13 October 2006, Maria Ladó of the Hungarian Ministry of Employment and Labour was elected chair for a two-year period. She replaces Finn Marjanna Valkonen, a long-standing head of the Workers' group, and President and Vice-President of the Governing Board over many years, who has resigned from the Board to pursue other areas of activity. The new Vice-Chairpersons are Swede Sverker Rudeberg representing the Employers' group, Belgian Herman Fonck representing the Workers' group, and German Bernhard Jansen representing the European Commission. The next Board meeting will take place on Friday 19 October 2007.

Training and mobility

Europe needs a more adaptable workforce if companies are to survive in the face of structural change and ongoing restructuring, according to the Foundation's European Monitoring Centre on Change (EMCC). Together with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), the EMCC has organised an exchange event, 'The role of competence and qualification development in fostering workforce mobility', which will take place in Thessaloniki, Greece, on 9–10 November 2006. The seminar will discuss whether company training programmes cater solely for short-term business needs or whether they provide real skills development opportunities and better employability prospects. It will consider how a fully operational European Qualifications Framework could encourage greater mobility among European workers.

More information on www.emcc.eurofound.europa.eu/content/source/eu06023a.html

European industrial relations dictionary update

The Foundation's *European industrial relations dictionary* has been updated and new features added, one year after its initial launch. In addition to a large number of changes in the already existing text, it now includes the following nine brand-new entries: autonomous agreements, disability, International Framework Agreements, migration, multi-sector agreement, National Reform Plans, labour standards, optical radiation and take over of companies. The dictionary is a comprehensive collection of the most commonly used terms in employment and industrial relations at EU level today. It contains almost 300 alphabetically listed entries, featuring concise definitions and relevant contextual information, with hyperlinks to EU legislation and case law.

Find out more on www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/

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European Union's evolving social policy and national models

9–10 November, Helsinki, Finland
Finnish Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, and the Finnish EU Presidency

The role of competence and qualification development in fostering workforce mobility

9–10 November 2006, Thessaloniki, Greece
EMCC company network seminar, in collaboration with Cedefop

Europe's demographic challenge: Jobs, pensions and social policies for a shrinking EU workforce

23 November 2006, Brussels, Belgium
Friends of Europe

The caring family

27–28 November, Athens, Greece
Institute of Social Protection and Solidarity, Athens

Industrial relations in the EU, Japan, US and other global economies

28–29 November 2006, Berlin, Germany
Foundation own event

PUBLICATIONS

Unless otherwise stated, publications are in English

Age and employment in the new Member States

www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0626.htm

Competitive Europe – Social Europe, partners or rivals? Background paper to the Foundation Forum 2006

www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0656.htm

Employment developments in childcare services for school-age children (info sheet in 16 languages)

www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0645.htm

ERM quarterly Issue 3 – autumn 2006

www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0686.htm

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Publication of the month

Mobility in Europe



www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0659.htm