

# Eurofound News



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Issue 7, July 2007

## DIRECTOR'S DIARY

### Focus on achieving the Lisbon goals

Social inclusion, the fight against poverty and the reconciliation of work with personal and family life are the priority themes for the Portuguese EU Presidency during the coming six months. During the Presidency, Eurofound will contribute to five high-profile events, covering such issues as social capital and job creation in rural Europe, gender equality and work-related musculoskeletal disorders. In the coming six months, Eurofound will also focus its activities on supporting the EU's efforts to relaunch the Lisbon Strategy in 2008.

A key aspect of EU policy is boosting employment growth. One way to achieve this is to facilitate the entry of more women into the labour market, particularly into those sectors with a predominantly male bias. In July, Eurofound publishes a report from its European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) on *Innovative gender equality measures in the transport industry*, which looks at initiatives taken in eight European companies to make their workplaces more attractive to female workers.

Another report from EIRO to be published this month, *Employee financial participation in the new Member States*, reveals that the initial progress made in employee financial participation (EFP) schemes in the countries that made the transition to market economies in the 1990s has since faltered.

As in previous years, there will no August issue of Eurofound News. The next issue will be published at the start of September. I would like to take this opportunity to wish all readers of Eurofound News a relaxing summer break.

**Jorma Karppinen**  
Director

## Pay trends differ across Europe

Average European wages increased significantly between 2005 and 2006, Eurofound's European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO) reveals in its annual update of pay trends, *Pay developments – 2006*. However, considerable differences remain between the former EU15 and the 12 new Member States, both in terms of trends and the level of pay increases.

The average collectively agreed nominal increases across the EU rose from 4.9% in 2005 to 5.6% in 2006. When adjusted for inflation, the real wage increase across the EU27 rose from 1.9% in 2005 to 2.7% in 2006. In the EU15, the average nominal increase had risen from 2.8% in 2005 to 2.9% in 2006, while the rate of real increase rose from 0.6% in 2005 to 0.8% in 2006. However, the average increase in the 12 new Member States was higher, rising from 7.5% in 2005 to 9.1% in 2006, with the rate of real increase climbing from 3.5% to 5.2%.

Read more at [www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/eurofoundnews/2007/july/newsletter2.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/eurofoundnews/2007/july/newsletter2.htm)

## Building on interagency cooperation

Plans for wide-ranging cooperation in research and information exchange have been outlined by Eurofound and the European Training Foundation (ETF). At a meeting held on 18–19 June in Dublin, representatives of the two agencies agreed to build on the expertise of both EU agencies, putting in place cooperation initiatives looking at the areas of migration, employment and labour market issues, social dialogue and social partnership.

Concrete measures proposed for each of these areas included establishing research cooperation to look at migration from the EU's neighbouring countries into the Union, initiating mutual invitations to both agencies' seminars on social dialogue, and devising joint research on the relationship between skills development and foreign direct investment (FDI).

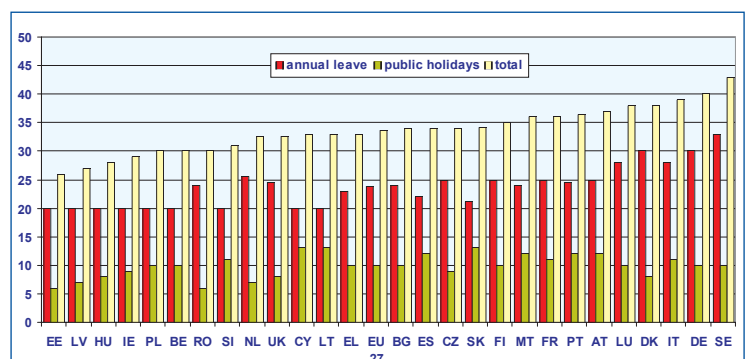
Read more at [www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/eurofoundnews/2007/july/newsletter3.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/eurofoundnews/2007/july/newsletter3.htm)

## RESEARCH IN BRIEF

### Sharp contrast in days' leave across EU

On average, workers in the 12 new Member States work more than two and a half working weeks longer each year than their EU15 counterparts. The total of agreed annual leave and public holidays varies from the upper level of 43 days in Sweden to 26 days in Estonia – a difference of nearly three-and-a-half working weeks. Other 'high-leave' countries include

Germany (40 days), Italy (39 days), Luxembourg and Denmark (38 days each). 'Low-leave' countries include Latvia (27 days), Hungary (28 days) and Ireland (29 days).



Source: EIRO *Working time developments – 2006* (forthcoming)

## Recognising the benefits of workplace diversity

While an increasing number of European companies are realising the potential business benefits of a more diverse workforce, raising awareness of the issue of diversity remains a challenge. Companies must also find the best way of aligning diversity measures with their overall business objectives. These are the conclusions reached at the recent EMCC company network seminar, 'Managing diversity in the workplace: competitive advantages for companies', held in the Paris headquarters of Schneider Electric, on 14–15 June. One of the key drivers for the implementation of diversity measures is the need to bring company practice into line with EU legislation introduced to end workplace discrimination on the grounds of age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, belief and ethnicity. However, companies are also competing for skilled workers and markets; increasingly, having a workforce that mirrors the diversity of the marketplace is seen as a competitive advantage.

More information on the seminar at [www.eurofound.europa.eu/emcc/events.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/emcc/events.htm)

## Website statistics under the spotlight

As part of the ongoing redesign and update of the website, Eurofound has recently integrated a new tool to better pinpoint which web pages, downloads and services are most popular. Feedback on the changes will be gathered through a user survey to be launched in September which will allow Eurofound to better customise its services for different user groups. As well as having a more unified look, the redesigned site now offers better access to Eurofound's observatories (EIRO, EWCO and EMCC). The website is the main access point for Eurofound's publications, all of which can be downloaded free of charge. Through the site, you can also subscribe to an electronic version of Eurofound News, which features expanded versions of the articles and is sent out once a month as an email newsletter.

Publications can be found at [www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/index.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/index.htm)

You can subscribe to the email newsletter at [www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/eurofoundnews/subscription.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/press/eurofoundnews/subscription.htm)

## Employee financial participation stagnates in NMS

Employee financial participation remains a little-used form of employee participation in the new Member States (NMS) that joined in 2004, according to a new report from Eurofound's European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO), *Employee financial participation in the New Member States*. Employee financial participation (EFP) – in particular, profit sharing – could make a positive contribution to tackling some of the socioeconomic problems of the NMS; however, the report concludes that the low policy priority currently being given to EFP in these countries indicates that it is unlikely, for the time being, to develop into standard employment practice. EFP, especially employee share ownership schemes, became popular in the NMS during the privatisations of formerly state-owned companies in the early 1990s. Since then, however, recessionary trends and low levels of profits have discouraged the development of EFP schemes.

## Roadshow goes to Portugal and Slovenia

Almost one third of workers in Slovenia fear losing their jobs in the coming six months, while workers in Portugal are more satisfied with their working conditions than the European average, according to findings from Eurofound's fourth *European Working Conditions Survey*. In September, Eurofound will present the survey's main findings during two two-day visits to Ljubljana and to Lisbon, in bilateral meetings with representatives from the Slovenian and Portuguese governments and social partners. The visit is part of Eurofound's series of visits to its stakeholders to allow for closer collaboration and to present recent Eurofound research, data and recommendations.

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### Socioeconomic and employment situation in Spain – Equal opportunities and management of diversity

4–6 July, Santander, Spain  
Economic and Social Council of Spain and International University Menéndez Pelayo  
Jean-Michel Miller will present a report on equal opportunities and managing diversity in the EU.

### Conference on active ageing

5 July, Rome, Italy  
European Social Fund and National Council for Economics and Labour (CNEL)  
Robert Anderson will present Foundation research into the ageing workforce.

### ICT for active ageing at work

5 July, Brussels, Belgium  
European Commission  
Gerlinde Ziniel will present findings from Eurofound's case studies on the ageing workforce.

### Flexicurity: A perspective for flexible labour markets and social security?

5–6 July, Berlin, Germany  
Hans Boeckler Foundation and Eurofound  
Willy Buschak will open the seminar and Greet Vermeylen will present findings on flexicurity strategies in Europe.

## PUBLICATIONS

Unless otherwise stated, publications are in English.

**Analyses of Eurobarometer survey 64.1 on geographical and labour mobility**  
[www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/migration.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/populationandsociety/migration.htm)

**Innovative gender equality measures in the transport industry**  
[www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0743.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/publications/htmlfiles/ef0743.htm)

**Quality of work and employment in Europe**  
[www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/studies/tn0612036s/index.htm](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/ewco/studies/tn0612036s/index.htm)

**Employee financial participation in the new Member States** (forthcoming)  
[www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0701018s/index.html](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0701018s/index.html)

## Publication of the month

### Pay developments – 2006



[www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0704029s/index.html](http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0704029s/index.html)