

## The true cost of poor housing

The cost of people living in inadequate housing in the EU Member States is hitting economies to the tune of nearly €194 billion per year, a new report from Eurofound states. The cost of addressing the shortcomings of the housing stock would be in the region of €295 billion (at 2011 prices). However, the report maintains, the outlay could be quickly recouped from savings on healthcare and a range of publicly funded services.

The effect of such investment would have a considerable impact on residents, improving their health and well-being. For example, for every €3 invested in basic measures, €2 would be paid back through savings in health and social care within one year. These measures include repairing ineffective heating and improving poor insulation, fixing broken lifts, updating old plumbing and electricity systems, improving security and addressing overcrowding. The report, *Inadequate housing in Europe: Costs and consequences*, aims to improve understanding of the true cost of substandard housing for EU Member States, and suggests policy initiatives that might help address its social and financial consequences. Read the report at

<http://bit.ly/HousingEurope>

## Combining work with partial retirement

With people living longer and birth rates falling across Europe, a priority of EU policy is to encourage Europeans to remain in work beyond current retirement ages, to minimise pressure on pension systems.

At present, older workers often leave the workforce before statutory retirement age, with health problems and care responsibilities cited as common reasons. Many more people simply wish to work less. One possible way to balance this legitimate desire for a better work–life balance with the need to address demographic pressures is to make more widespread use of partial retirement schemes. These schemes enable older workers to reduce their working hours, while the loss of income is compensated for by a partial payment of their pension. At the same time, workers continue to earn and to contribute to that pension. A report published by Eurofound explores the success of such schemes in extending working lives. No scheme was identified that unambiguously extended working lives for all participants. Partial retirement may have extended working lives for specific groups: overall, however, the reduction in hours enabled by partial retirement outweighs the increased hours due to prolonging the working lives of participants.

Read *Extending working lives through flexible retirement schemes: Partial retirement* at

<http://bit.ly/PartialRetirement>

## FINDINGS IN FIGURES

**58%** – the percentage of junior doctors in the UK who voted against contractual changes proposed by the country’s National Health Service (NHS).

**64** – the number of employees of Siemens Wind Power in Denmark known to have developed occupational diseases in the last decade.

**40%** – the proportion of respondents in a recent Polish survey who feel they do not have sufficient opportunities to pursue their professional development.

**5,000** – the number of job losses announced by French telecommunications company SFR as part of a major reorganisation.

**€677 million** – the sum invested in the production of a new Volkswagen assembly line in AutoEuropa, Portugal, with the creation of 500 new jobs.

**81%** – the proportion of respondents in a Latvian survey citing economic problems as the top priority to be addressed in the country.

Source: Eurofound’s network of European correspondents

## Irish Minister for Social Protection visits Eurofound



On 7 September, **Leo Varadkar** (pictured right), Irish Minister for Social Protection, visited Eurofound. He met with Eurofound’s Director **Juan Menéndez-Valdés** and senior research and communications staff to learn more about the Agency’s work in the fields of sustainable work and inclusive labour markets. Eurofound has recently published a report analysing Member States’ strategies to make work more sustainable – enabling more people to participate in the labour market and continue to do so until an older age.

The report, *Sustainable work throughout the life course: National policies and strategies* is available at <http://bit.ly/SWStrategy>

## Finding win-win solutions to boost competitiveness

Well-functioning social dialogue is a key component in implementing the reforms that will boost European competitiveness. A new report from Eurofound examines how management, employees and their representatives achieve common solutions to common problems. It identifies a number of elements of good practice, such as regular meetings between management and employees to follow up on decisions, continuous feedback (from both managers and employees) to facilitate adjustment to new practices, supporting employees in contributing to decision-making, and training to smooth the implementation of new measures. The research was based on 20 company case studies in five Member States in a sample drawn from Eurofound's European Company Survey 2013. Read the report *Win-win arrangements: Innovative measures through social dialogue at company level* at <http://bit.ly/WWInnovation>

## Eurofound contributes to ILERA conference

The 11th European Congress of the International Labour and Employment Relations Association (ILERA) took place in Milan over 8–10 September 2016. A corporate member of ILERA, Eurofound has played an active role in previous European and world congresses, contributing to the discussion and sharing information. It continued its contribution at this year's congress, the theme of which – *The future of representation* – is particularly relevant to Eurofound's work. The Agency presented material and hosted workshops on such topics as the prospects for European sectoral social dialogue; employment relations and the regulation of representation; trade union membership; and labour law and employment policy. Learn more about the Agency's work on representativeness at <http://bit.ly/Representativeness>

## A year in review – working life in 2015

A new report from Eurofound – *Developments in working life in Europe: EurWORK annual review 2015* – collates information based on research from Eurofound's network of European correspondents. The correspondents report national-level information on industrial relations and working conditions for the Agency's European Observatory of Working Life (EurWORK). The material, published in the form of articles over the course of the year, focuses on major developments regarding the regulation of the employment relationship. It reviews and compares developments, highlighting similarities and differences among and across countries. It also seeks to report on debates related to working life, at EU and national levels. Read the report at <http://bit.ly/EuRWork2015>



<http://bit.ly/HousingEurope>

## Latest from EurWORK

**Greece: The 2016 National General Collective Labour Agreement signed**  
<http://bit.ly/GRAgreement>

**Lithuania: Launch of Information Centre for posted and migrant workers**  
<http://bit.ly/LTCentre>

**New developments in the protection of whistle-blowers in the workplace**  
<http://bit.ly/WBProtect>

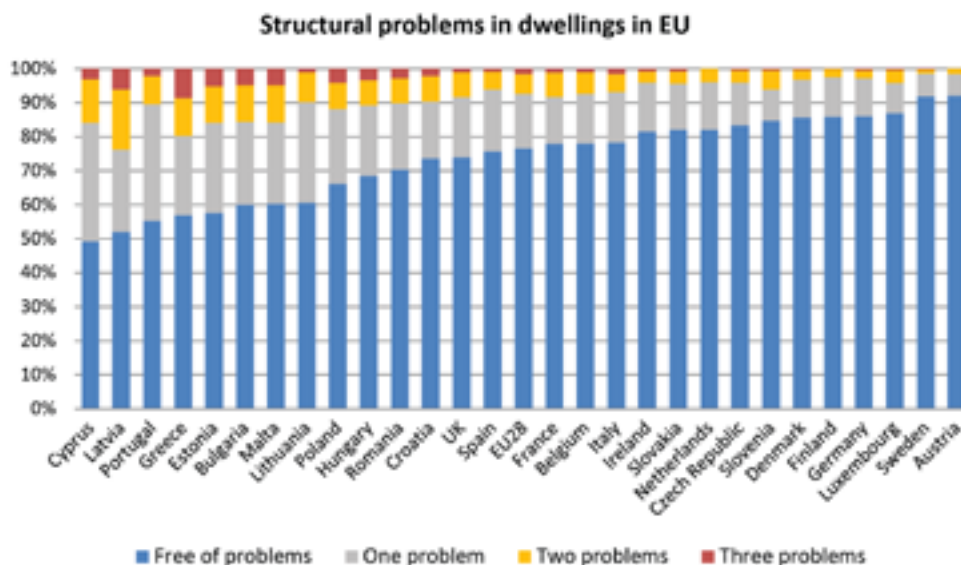
**Norway: New legislation on temporary layoffs**  
<http://bit.ly/NOLayoffs>

**Poland: Polish employees pessimistic about career prospects**  
<http://bit.ly/PLPessimism>

**Romania: Protests over proposed law on wage-setting in the public sector**  
<http://bit.ly/ROPestests>

**Slovenia: Police end a six-month strike following agreement**  
<http://bit.ly/SLPolice>

## Charting the state of housing across the EU



Source: <http://bit.ly/HousingEurope>

The prevalence of structural problems in dwellings in the EU varies considerably between Member States. On average, 12% of EU residents report damp or leaks in their walls and roofs; 9% live in accommodation with rot in the windows, doors or floors; and 14% of residents indicate that they cannot afford to keep their home adequately warm. Such problems are most common in Cyprus, where 51% of dwellings have a structural deficiency, and least common in Austria and Sweden, where 92% of residents reported having no structural problems in their dwellings.