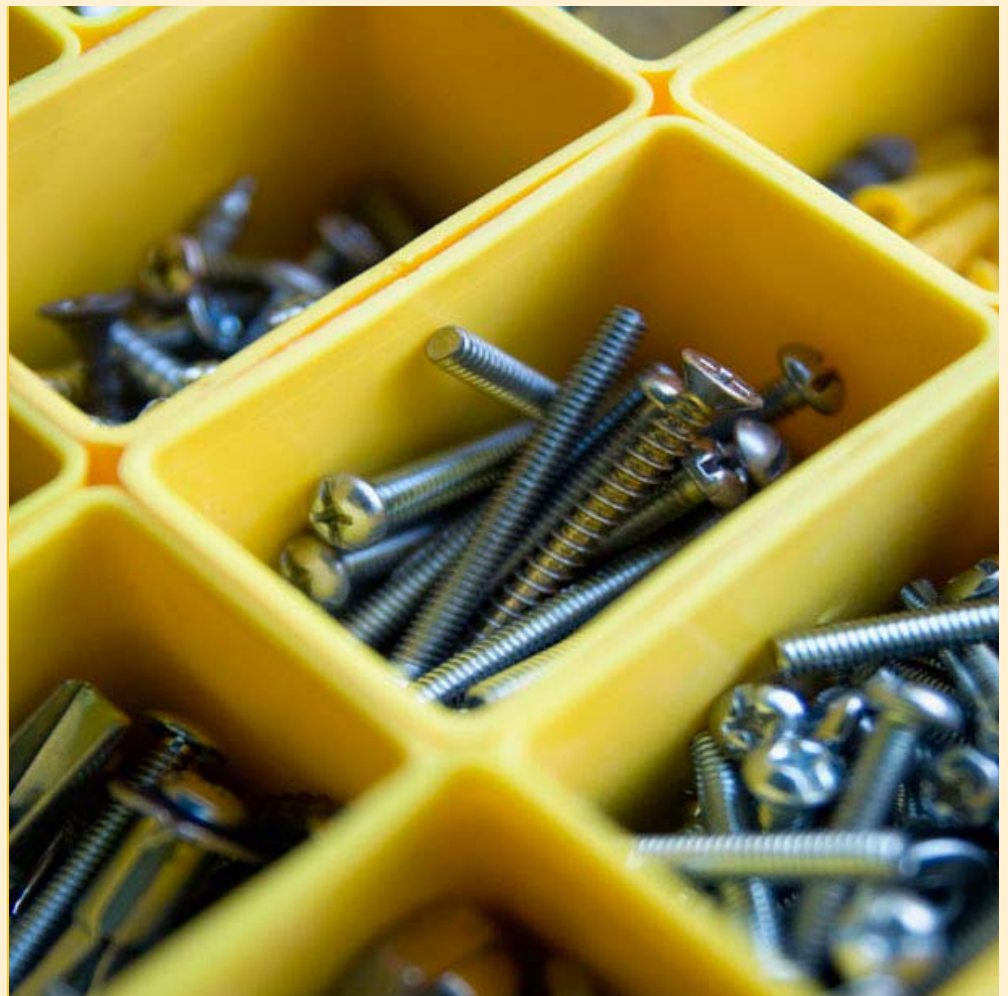




# Part-time work in Europe



*European Company Survey 2009*

Part-time work in Europe

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**Research project:** European Company Survey - flexibility practices and social dialogue



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

# *European Company Survey 2009*

## Part-time work in Europe

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# Foreword

Non-standard employment and, more particularly, part-time work has been increasing worldwide for the past two decades. This trend has been especially strong in Europe, where the issue of different working time arrangements is an important part of the discussion among policymakers and social partners, and something which the European Union (EU) has promoted to increase flexibility for workers and employers.

Indeed, in an EU Framework Agreement the social partners have expressed their willingness to eliminate discrimination against part-time workers.

This kind of work, in the widest sense, may have both positive and negative effects for governments, workers and employers. An important aspect is that it can allow employees to stay in the labour market by being able to adapt their work to their home life. It is increasingly being looked at from a life-course perspective: why it might be useful to people in some phases of their life, and whether they are able to move from part-time to full-time and back again. These sorts of transitions are essential for a modern labour market. The focus of many studies has been the effect of part-time work on individual careers, especially those of highly qualified people. It is often argued that there are no jobs available for highly qualified people who wish to work part-time. However, the question remains whether this is true and where in Europe such jobs exist. This report looks at the results of two surveys, conducted by Eurofound, that contribute to research on part-time work. The second European Company Survey (ECS, carried out in 2009) concentrates on the company perspective of part-time work. This survey included questions, not only on the existence of part-time work at establishment level, but also on the number of highly qualified people or managers working part-time. At the same time, the fourth European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS, carried out in 2005) provides insight into part-time work from the employees' perspective, especially the working conditions of part-time workers. This report looks at the results of these two surveys and focuses on the effect of part-time work on the career of individuals and on those who are highly qualified or in management positions.

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

Part-time employment has been increasing in Europe for the past two decades. This is especially true for countries where different working time arrangements have been discussed among policymakers and social partners as a way to increase flexibility. Part-time work, in the widest sense, may have both positive and negative effects for workers and employers. While some workers view it as a solution for balancing work and family life in certain life phases, other part-timers complain of various disadvantages at work compared to full-time workers. It is often argued that there are no available positions for high qualified people wishing to work part-time. For employers, part-time work may have an important use in the work cycle, but it may also mean increased labour costs. This report tries to bring together the results of two European-wide surveys to provide a snapshot of part-time work – presenting both the company and the employee point of view.

## Policy context

Part-time employment is covered by the Part-time Work Directive (97/81/EC), implementing the Framework Agreement on part-time work, which was signed by the social partners in 1997. Its objectives are to eliminate discrimination against part-time workers, to improve the quality of part-time work, to facilitate voluntary part-time work and to contribute to the flexible organisation of working time, taking the needs of both employers and workers into account. Also relevant are the Working Time Directive (93/104/EC), which includes regulations on the hours of work designed to protect the health and safety of workers and the Equal Pay Directive (75/117/EEC), prohibiting all discrimination on grounds of sex with regard to all aspects and conditions of remuneration.

In March 2010 the European Commission initiated a comprehensive review of the Working Time Directive. One of the objectives of this review will be to improve balance between work and private life, which puts part-time work once again in the focus of policy discussions.

## Key findings

A literature review confirms that part-time has positive and negative consequences that are different for employers, employees and the economy as a whole.

On the positive side:

- part-time has a positive effect on the employment rate as it is understood to increase female participation in the labour force;
- employers can adjust their resources to cyclical conditions over the course of a time period using part-time;
- for employees it may be a solution for better work–life balance, enabling parents to spend more time with their children while remaining in employment.

On the negative side:

- part-time may increase overall labour costs for businesses due to the presence of fixed costs;
- employees working part-time on average have lower earnings and fewer possibilities for progressing in their career;

- some results suggest that the quality of part-time jobs is on average lower, although job satisfaction of part-time workers is on the whole similar to that of full-time workers.

Looking at the proportion and profile of people working part-time across Europe, the following was found:

- The part-time rate has increased in the last two decades for both men and women at a similar rate.
- At the same time, the part-time rate for women (32%) is four times the part-time rate for men (8%).
- While male part-time is most common in the youngest and the oldest age groups, the female part-time rate increases with age, reflecting gender inequalities in transitions from part time to full time.
- There are large differences in both the proportion of part-timers and the organisation of part-time work across European countries.

The differences in the part-time rate can be explained by various socioeconomic factors. The reasons behind a low part-time rate could reflect very different economic phenomena, for example:

- lack of demand or even opposition against involuntary part-time by workers;
- lack of regulation;
- shortage of good quality part-time jobs;
- undeclared part-time work.

On the other hand, a higher proportion of female part-time workers may highlight barriers to, for example, access to affordable childcare. The differences in working hours cultures may also affect peoples willingness to work part-time.

Part-time workers' working conditions were found to be different from that of full time workers. The main differences were as follows:

- Those working shorter hours are less likely to perform complex tasks;
- Part-time workers are less optimistic about their prospects for promotion;
- Part-time workers are less likely to receive training and to learn new things at work;
- Full-time workers are more likely to find their job intellectually demanding than part-time workers.

The following part-time patterns across European establishments:

Across European companies, part-time is most common in education, health and social work, all of which are female-dominated sectors.

Generally, a higher proportion of female workers result in a higher incidence of part-time in many companies.

Part-time is most often carried out through some fixed hours every day. However, other forms of part-time are becoming more common, increasing the range of possibilities for employers and employees.

In some companies part-time work has become more common among those working in professional or management positions that need high qualifications. However, across the whole workforce this is still a rare phenomenon: three quarters of companies have no part-time workers in these positions.

## Policy conclusions

While part-time has both positive and negative aspects, it is a feature of modern working life. For this reason, policymakers could provide opportunities for those wishing to work part-time to do so, whether they are male or female. At the same time, it is important to make full time work possible for people wishing and able to work full time.

Policymakers should aim to reduce the identified differences in working conditions between part-time workers and full-time workers. Importantly, the disparity in access to training should be reduced.

New forms of part-time work are starting to emerge alongside just working a few hours each day. These new options could be further developed and their use encouraged, providing increased flexibility for companies and workers. It would be useful to identify and exchange good practice on what works well for companies and employees.

Part time among managers and people working in high qualified positions is marginal. As this could be a barrier to more equal representation of women in management (and highly qualified) positions, it is again necessary to identify and disseminate good company practice in this respect.



# The importance of part-time work

# 1

## Part-time in EU legislation

Part-time workers are employees whose normal weekly working hours are less than the normal hours of a comparable full-time worker. This type of work is covered by specific parts of European employment law.

- **The Part-time Work Directive (97/81/EC)** implements the Framework Agreement on Part-time Work, signed by the social partners in 1997. Its objectives are to eliminate discrimination against part-time workers, to improve the quality of part-time work, to facilitate voluntary part-time work and to contribute to the flexible organisation of working time, taking the needs of both the employers and the workers into account.
- **The Working Time Directive (93/104/EC)** includes regulations on the hours of work, all designed to protect the health and safety of workers
- **The Equal Pay Directive (75/117/EEC)** prohibits all discrimination on grounds of sex with regard to all aspects and conditions of remuneration.
- **Legal precedence**, accumulated from cases relating to part-time work and equal pay in which the European Court of Justice (ECJ) has upheld claims to equal treatment.

## Voluntary and involuntary part-time

Before considering the effects of part-time work, it is important to distinguish between whether it is voluntary or involuntary. The former is at the request of the employee, and the latter is at the request of the employer. These also reflect two perspectives on flexibility: a 'flexible' organisation is one that uses and promotes part-time and other atypical forms of work to meet workers' needs; another view is that that an organisation can increase competitiveness by using flexible work forms.

While the two forms of part-time work have different consequences on both individuals and companies, they exist in parallel in the European Employment Strategy.

Some research seems to imply that some women prefer part-time work so they can meet other commitments, although these preferences might change as they get older. Other researchers (such as Gash, 2008) stress there is a group of individuals for whom this kind of work is not in fact voluntary, but simply the only option when facing certain family responsibilities. It is most often parents – especially mothers – with small children who are forced to choose part-time work because, for example, there is a lack of affordable, good-quality childcare.

## The implications of part-time work from a tripartite point of view

In fact, research highlights many motives for part-time work and its consequences for employers, workers and governments. The most often cited reasons are summarised in Table 1.

**Table 1: The importance of part time in a tripartite structure**

	Employer	Individual	Government
<b>Positive aspects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>allows employers to adjust hours worked to cyclical conditions</li> <li>adjustment of production and labour costs lead to productivity gains</li> <li>may meet the preference of workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>solution for work–life balance (childcare, education)</li> <li>facilitates progressive entrance to or withdrawal from the labour market over the life course</li> <li>may increase life satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increases labour participation, especially for women</li> </ul>
<b>Negative aspects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>fixed costs (e.g. recruitment, training, social security) may increase overall labour costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>hourly earnings of part-time is lower than that of full-time</li> <li>reduced benefits</li> <li>reduced career prospects</li> <li>transition to and from full-time work into part-time may be difficult</li> <li>reduced job satisfaction/job quality</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wastage of resources, under-use of investment in human capital, as many part-time workers are highly educated</li> <li>part-time jobs may crowd out full-time positions</li> </ul>

This summary reflects the most common points of view regarding part-time work, without distinguishing between its different forms. Some of the main approaches are explained below.

### **Role in the economic cycle**

Involuntary part-time work can be viewed as enabling employers to adjust their labour force, in terms of hours worked, to economic conditions. As a result, it is seen as having a countercyclical effect. During economic downturns, employers reduce the number of hours worked by staff and/or hire new workers in part-time jobs. On the other hand, in an upswing companies mostly create full-time jobs to meet the increased demand. Looking at age and gender groups, Buddelmeyer, Moure & Ward (2008) found that young male workers were particularly affected by this, but the effects were unclear for women and insignificant for older workers.

The labour market situation will also influence the willingness of employers to meet workers' needs (Allaart & Bellmann, 2007). In tight labour markets workers have more influence and are more likely to achieve their preferred working hours than in a time of high unemployment. Depending on the preferences of workers, this could lead to more part-time jobs. However, in a tight labour market employers can also successfully persuade some of their part-time workers temporarily to work full-time.

### **Solution for work–life balance and the gender perspective**

It is widely reported that part-time work may be a convenient solution for parents (especially mothers) with small children wishing to remain in the labour market. For example, Buddelmeyer, Moure & Ward (2008) found that the fertility rate is strongly and positively linked with the part-time employment rate, suggesting that part-time work indeed creates an opportunity for women to combine a job with taking care of their children.

Some studies focus on the gender aspect of work–life balance. As women increase their amount of paid worked hours, men do not assume a greater share of the housework. Based on a study carried out in the Netherlands, Booth and van Ours (2010) found that there is a clear gender bias in the division of labour within the household. Where the male partner works full time, more hours worked by the female partner result in just a non-proportional decrease in housework, while male partner's housework remains constant. This finding was confirmed by a report on the gender perspective of working conditions, based on the fourth European Working Conditions Survey - EWCS (Eurofound, 2007), which found that women work longer than men, especially if they work full-time, due to the unequal distribution of housework. Women working part-time also work longer than men, as they do

most of the unpaid work. This reflects the importance of the work–life balance for women, and may explain why many studies on part-time work concentrate exclusively on women.

### **The life course aspect**

Mothers with small children are not the only group choosing to work part-time. In most countries there is a high concentration of both male and female young people choosing this kind of work to supplement their income while completing their education. Once their education is finished, young people usually prefer to get a full-time job.

Women withdraw from the labour market to give birth and might stay at home with small children before deciding to re-enter on a part-time basis to reconcile work and family life. However, as their children grow up, they want full-time work once more. In some European countries the legal and social infrastructure allows or even facilitates this (see chapter 2).

Older people may prefer to work part-time because of health problems or to make use of (financially) attractive gradual retirement schemes (Allaart & Bellmann, 2007). In some European countries there are regulations (often based on sector collective agreements) for older workers to reduce their working hours with a less than proportional sacrifice of their wages. In addition, pension rights are calculated differently across Europe, some systems concentrating on the whole working career while others are based on the last five years of the working career.

A report on working time options over a lifetime (Eurofound, 2006) concluded that in most European countries social protection and tax systems have not yet implemented policies that represent the life course perspective, resulting in gender and age discrimination in the use of different working time arrangements. At the same time, several new, life-course oriented options have emerged in some countries. The same report highlights the fact that the impact of becoming a parent on women’s careers varies considerably across European countries, and that it has a strong connection to certain elements of family policy in individual countries. Systems that have an impact on women’s employment patterns include childcare, options for extended leave, options to work reduced hours, and elderly care. The configuration of these policies can therefore strengthen or weaken the male breadwinner model and support the development of other life course employment patterns for women (and also for men) (see chapter 2 and Eurofound, 2006).

### **Part-time work: equal to full-time work?**

A number of studies (Connolly and Gregory, 2007; Manning and Petrongolo, 2007; McDonald, Bradley and Brown, 2009) have shown that part-time workers are in general doing more basic and lower paid work than full-time workers. For example, research shows that in the UK, 51% of all part-time workers, both male and female, define themselves as working below their potential. Similarly, part-time workers, usually women, are at a disadvantage in terms of access to training and development opportunities (Lyonette, 2010). The EWCS has a number of questions on the nature of tasks performed by workers and other aspects of job quality, such as training. The analysis of these questions for part-time and full-time workers is presented in chapter 2 of this report.

### **Effect on life satisfaction**

It has been suggested that there is a strong gender bias regarding the relationship between the number of hours worked and life satisfaction. For example, Booth and van Ours (2009) found that the life satisfaction of women who have a male partner is reduced if they themselves work full-time, especially if they work 40 or more hours. The same report found that their life satisfaction is increased if their



partner works full-time. At the same time, their male partner's life satisfaction is unaffected by partner's market hours, but it is increased if they themselves work full-time. This suggests that while men are 'happier' if they work full-time, women are more satisfied if they work shorter hours, as long as their partner has a full-time job.

In a different study, Booth and van Ours (2010) found that while men are happier if they work longer hours, they also prefer their female partner to work part-time.

### **Effect on promotion prospects**

A previous Eurofound report (2004) established that part-time workers are less likely to be promoted than full-time workers. Other studies (McGovern, 2004) found that non-standard employment is more common in jobs with no career ladders and thus with no promotion prospects.

High qualifications, longer full-time experience, long tenure at the workplace and being in a professional or management position generally all have a positive effect on promotion chances. Zeytinoglu (2008) confirmed (taking into account workplace, industry, human capital and personal characteristics) that those in non-standard employment are less likely to be promoted. Within non-standard employment, temporary full-time workers are still more likely to be promoted than regular part-time or temporary part-time workers. However, the report concludes that this applies only to women (who dominate non-standard employment).

### **Effect on pay**

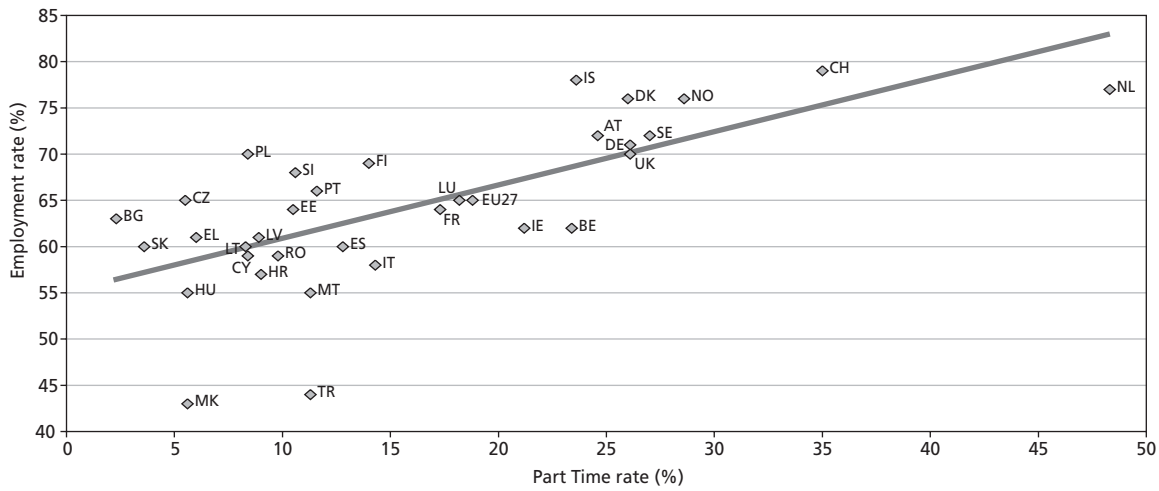
A significant number of reports analyse the pro rata pay gap between part-time workers and full-time workers, for both men and women. For example, O'Dorchai et al (2007) showed that the part-time pay gap for men ranges from 16% to 149% in the six EU countries analysed. Some researchers (Fouarge and Muffels, 2009) demonstrated that part-time work history in the previous 10 years has a scarring effect on the current wage. The part-time pay gap is also connected to the general difference in pay between men and women.

### **Role in increasing the employment rate**

An increase in part-time work is often expected to boost the overall employment rate. The following scatter diagram compares the part-time rate and the employment rate in European countries.

While this analysis does not take into account other factors that may affect the employment rate, it divides European countries into two groups: one group has a high part-time rate and generally a higher employment rate as well (the Nordic countries as well as the Netherlands, Austria, and Germany), while the other group has lower part-time rates and employment rates (especially Hungary, Poland, Romania). Exceptions are Finland, Portugal, Slovenia and Cyprus with a comparatively high employment rate (all nearly 70%) and a lower-than-average part-time rate (14%, 12% 11% and 8%, respectively).

Figure 1: Part-time rates and overall employment rates in European countries, 2009



Source: Eurostat (analysed by Eurofound)

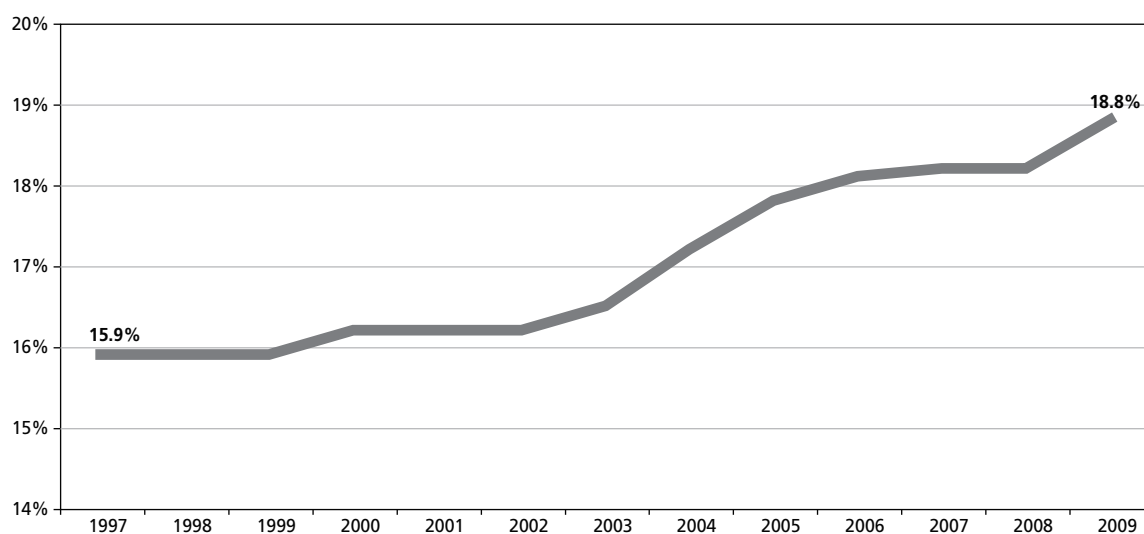
A number of studies have found a positive association between part-time work and total employment, which holds if changes are considered (Booth and van Ours, 2010). They also found a negative correlation between part-time workers preferring to work full-time and the share of females working part-time. More information on the national differences in part-time rates and employment rates are presented in Chapter 2.



## Recent trends in part-time work

The last decade has seen a steady increase in the part-time employment rate in Europe. This increase accelerated between 2003 and 2005, levelling in the three years that followed. Between 2008 and 2009, the part-time rate suddenly increased again, suggesting that the economic recession of 2009 had an impact on the number of people working part-time in Europe. In 2009, 18.8% of workers in the EU27 worked part-time, representing an increase of nearly three percentage points in ten years (see Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Persons employed part-time in the EU27 (% of total employment)**



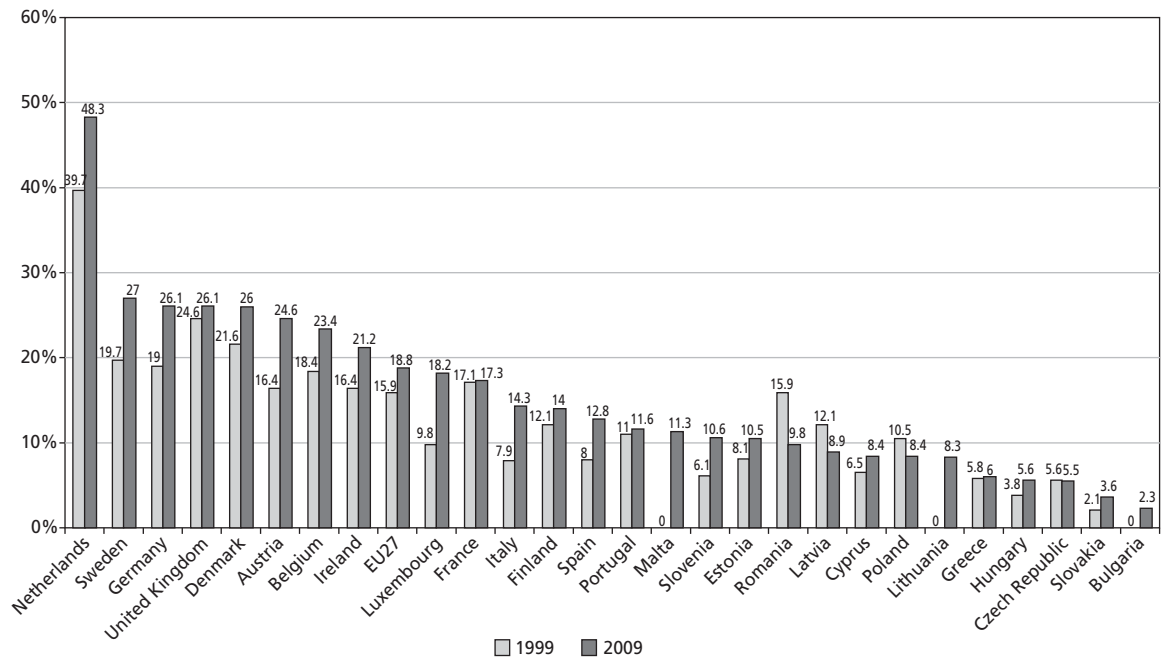
Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Although part-time work is unequally distributed between genders in the EU as a whole, both male and female part-time work has increased at a similar pace between 1999 and 2009. During this period the proportion of women working part-time increased from 28.5% to 32.0%, while the male part-time rate increased from 6.4% to 8.3%. The surge in the part-time rate during the recession was similar for both genders.

## National differences in the context of legislation and social infrastructure

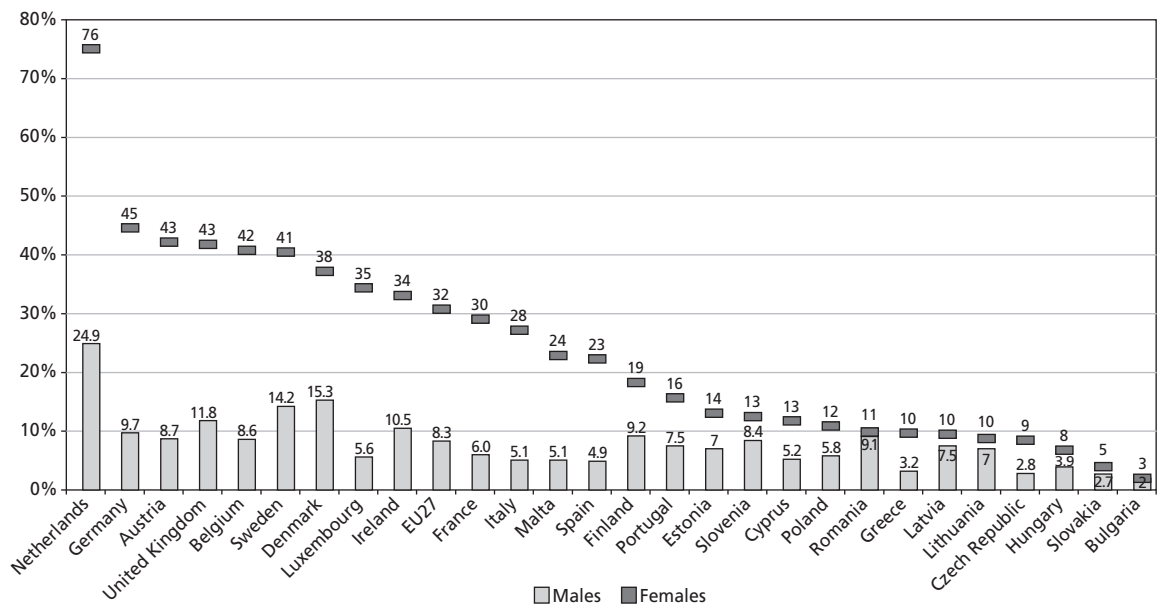
The part-time employment rate in the EU27 ranges from 2.3% in Bulgaria to 48.3% in the Netherlands (Eurostat, 2009). The rate in the Netherlands is almost twice the rate in Sweden, which is the second highest in the EU at 27%. In addition to this diversity, there are considerable differences in the change of the part-time rates over the past ten years. In most countries there has been a moderate increase. However, in some countries, for example the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Austria, Sweden, Germany, and Italy, this expansion was significant. Some countries have experienced a slight decrease pre-2009, for example France, Poland and Estonia. (The Estonian part-time rate then increased significantly in 2009, while the Polish rate continued to decrease). At the same time, there has been a significant decrease in overall part-time rates in Romania and Latvia.

Figure 3: Proportion of part-time workers in EU27 countries, 1999 and 2009



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey)

Figure 4: Male and female part-time workers in EU27 countries, 2009



Source: Eurostat (Labour Force Survey, 2009)

Looking at genders, the variety of part-time rates is even higher. The difference between the part-time rates of males and females is highest in the Netherlands – where over two thirds of working women and about a quarter of working men work part-time. It is followed by Germany and Austria, while in Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Lithuania the part-time rate for men is nearly the same as for women

(see Figure 4 and Appendix 2). The chart illustrates the phenomenon that, in general, the more people work part-time in a country, the larger the difference between the male and female part-time rate. Both Figure 3 and Figure 4 show all of the new Member States (NMS12) on one side of the chart, displaying lower than average part-time rates and low difference between the male and female rates, and, with the exception of Greece, all of the pre-2004 Member States (EU15) on the other side.

### Factors affecting the part-time rate

The differences in national part-time rates call for a more in-depth look at the social infrastructure and the legislation of different countries. Generally the following factors are considered to influence the differences in national part-time employment rates:

- **Access to childcare**

Access to good-quality and affordable childcare is generally regarded as an incentive for parents to work full-time. When childcare is more expensive, one parent may choose to reduce his or her working hours to take care of the children. Gash (2008) argues that inadequate childcare limits carers' participation in the labour force, and concludes that in countries with little or no public childcare and expensive private childcare, mothers appear to be constrained in low quality part-time employment.

- **Differences in working hours cultures**

Societies in Europe have different attitudes towards working time, with average weekly working hours for full-time workers ranging from around 39 to around 44 hours (LFS, 2008). If part-time workers are included, average weekly working hours range from around 30 hours (Netherlands) to around 42 hours (Greece). In some countries, such as the UK and many new Member States it is socially acceptable and desirable to work longer hours, while in other countries such as France, Sweden and the Netherlands a more welfare-orientated social model is in place, characterised by shorter than average working hours. In many new Member States people work longer than average because they want to boost their low hourly wages and salaries (e.g. FedEE, 2010 and EIRO, 2009).

- **Quality of available part-time jobs**

Evidence from specific countries suggests (Lyonette, 2010) that in most labour markets there are fewer higher-level jobs available on a part-time than on a full-time basis. As explained in Chapter 1, this may result in some well qualified workers (especially working mothers) in lower level jobs. It may also discourage some workers from engaging in a part-time job.

- **Differences in legislation**

Companies use part-time work differently: some tailor it to their own needs, some to the needs of workers, and some to both. The way this is reflected by the legislation differs from country to country (see Appendix 1).

Some countries can be grouped together in terms of attitudes towards part-time work, (which may explain their part-time rates' divergence from the average):

1. **Countries in which part-time work is prevalent and popular.** In these countries, such as the Netherlands, Germany, Austria and Denmark, part-time work has historically been supported by employees and employers and is actively promoted by the government and political parties. These societies are characterised by a high part-time rate, a large difference between the proportion of men and women working part-time (although in Denmark the difference between

the male and the female part-time work is lower than the EU average) and a high employment rate for women as well as a high overall employment rate. The Netherlands has an exceptionally high female part-time rate of 76%. Although they both have a high part-time rate, Sweden and the UK do not belong to this group of countries – policy makers here want to decrease the high proportion of involuntary part-timers, mostly women (see Appendix 1).

2. **Countries in which part-time is very uncommon.** These are generally new Member States, such as Bulgaria, Hungary, and Slovakia (although Greece is also in this group). Employees, despite efforts made by governments to remove barriers to part-time work, seem to prefer full-time work, possibly because they have low average hourly pay (EIRO, 2009). As this applies to both sexes, the part-time rates for men and women in these countries are very similar. Access to free childcare is common (OECD, 2004), as is a relatively low fertility rate. These countries also have low employment rates, which might be in part explained by the high incidence of undeclared work in their economies.
3. **Countries in which part-time is relatively uncommon.** These countries, such as Finland and Portugal have a culture of longer weekly hours for both men and women, and a high employment rate for both sexes. In these countries the difference between the male and female part-time rate is low. In Finland this is facilitated by a well-developed and trusted childcare system. In Portugal access to childcare has improved greatly in the last decade, but the fertility rate remains low (OECD, 2004).

Some examples of countries and the different factors affecting the part-time rate are listed in Appendix 1.

## Part time in European companies

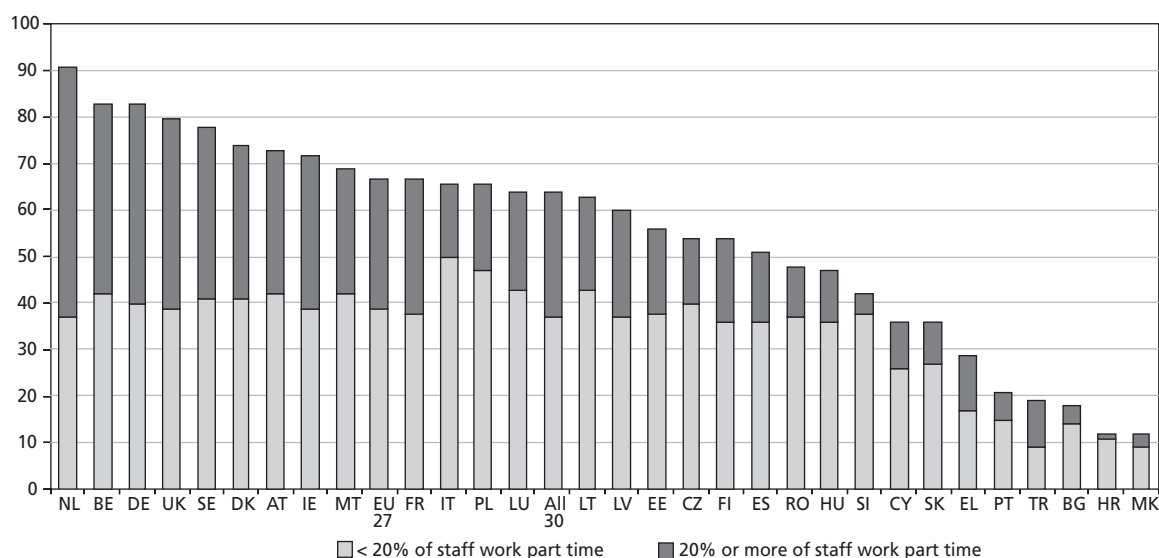
The European Company Survey (ECS), carried out in 30 countries in 2009, found that 67% of the companies surveyed in the EU27 employ at least one part-time worker.

The proportion of companies employing at least one part-time worker is highest in the Netherlands (over 90%), Belgium, Germany (both around 82%) and the UK (80%) and lowest in the three candidate countries as well as Bulgaria and Portugal (all 20% or less). Unsurprisingly, in countries with a lower than average part-time rate generally fewer companies report the existence of part-time workers and vice versa. An exception is Malta, where although the part-time rate overall is relatively low at 10%, the proportion of companies employing at least one part-time worker is slightly higher than average. This may be explained by the low proportion of part-time workers employed in companies.

Companies which report that more than 20% of their staff work part-time are most commonly found in the four countries with the highest incidence of part-time work (Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and the UK). At the same time, fewer than 5% of companies in Croatia, Macedonia, Bulgaria and Slovenia had such a high proportion of part-time workers. These are all countries characterised by a relatively low overall part-time rate.

Interestingly, companies in Italy report an average overall incidence of part-time workers, but the proportion of these companies employing more than 20% of their staff on a part-time basis is highest across Europe at 50%.

Figure 5: Companies reporting that they employ part-time workers (%)

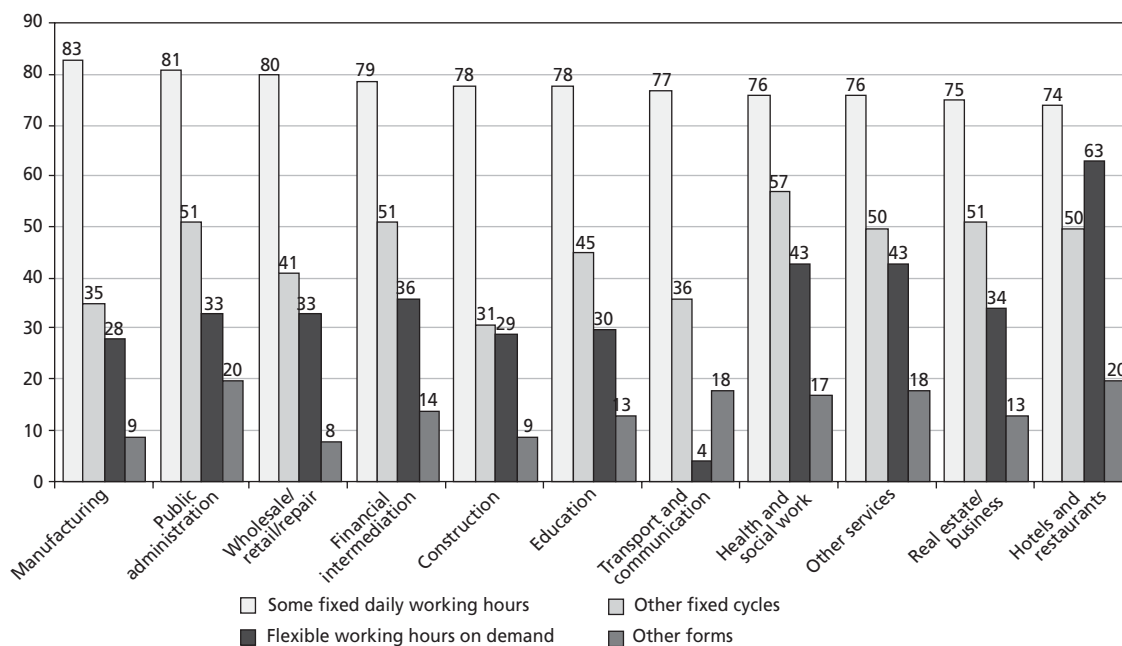


Source: European Company Survey (2009)

### Different part-time arrangements

Across European companies, some fixed hours every day is the most common form of part-time work (78%), followed by other fixed cycles, for example some fixed days of the week in full-time, the other days off (45%), while flexible working hours, which are fixed a few days or hours in advance according to the company's needs are relatively less common (35%).

Figure 6: Forms of part-time used in different sectors, EU27 (%)



Source: European Company Survey (2009)

The incidence of flexible hours at the demand of the employer is most common in hotels and restaurants, where the workload is often dependent on unforeseeable factors, while it is least common in manufacturing, construction and education.



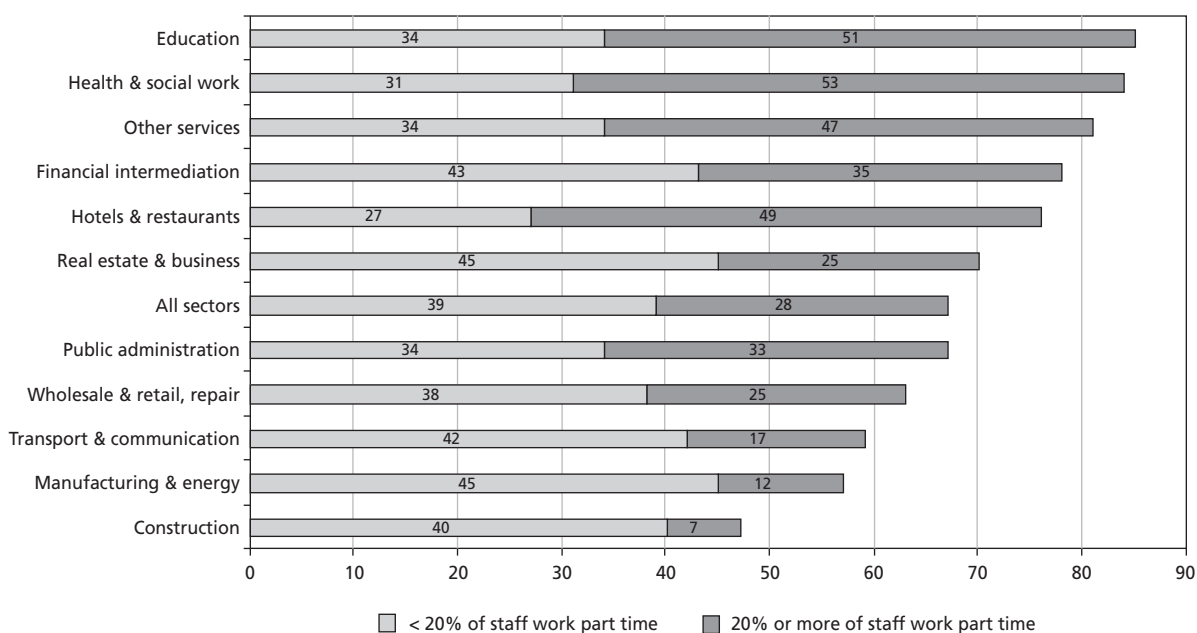
Compared with the results of the Establishment Survey on Working Time (ESWT, 2004–2005, carried out in the EU15 and the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia), more companies are now using different types of part-time work. This represents more possibilities for employees as well as employers.

### Part-time work by sectors

The sectors in which the most companies employ at least one part-time worker are education (85% of companies) and health and social work (84%). In the construction sector only 47% of companies employ part-time workers and the rate is also relatively low in manufacturing and energy (57%) and transport and communication (59%).

The companies which employed more than 20% of part-time staff were most commonly involved in health and social work, education, and hotels and restaurants. In these sectors around half of all companies had such a high proportion of part-timers.

**Figure 7: Part-time work reported in different sectors, ECS 2009 (%)**



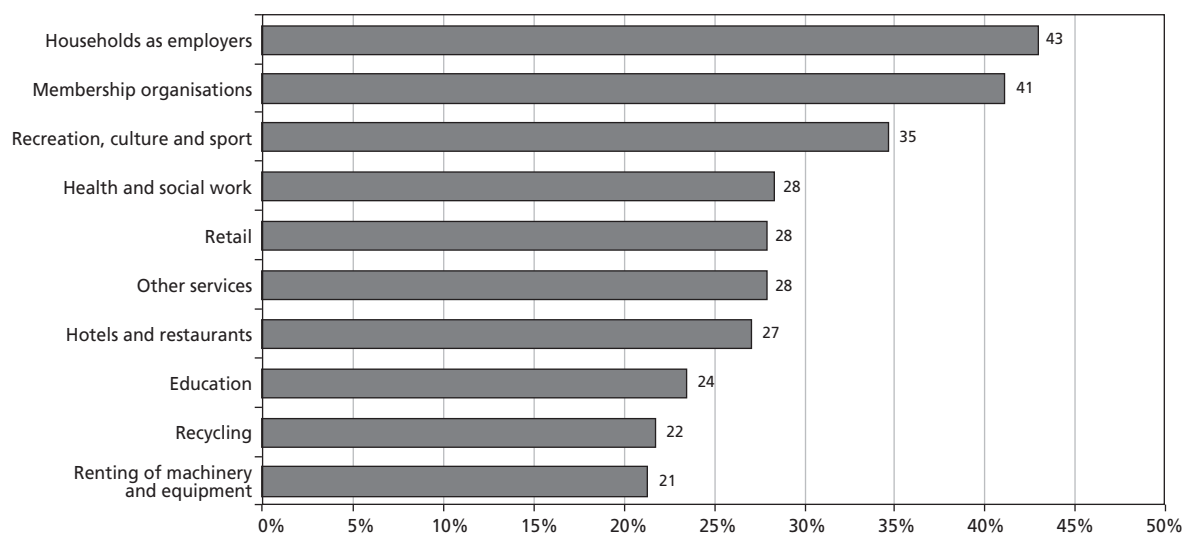
Source: European Company Survey (2009)

Again, compared with the results of the ESWT (2004–2005), there has been a slight increase in the number of companies using part-time staff, from 64% in 2004/05 to 69% in 2009. This trend can be observed in almost all countries, but it is strongest in the southern European countries and in Slovenia and Luxembourg. However, in Poland, the share of establishments using part-time staff has slightly decreased. Although the education and health and social work sectors were better covered by the second survey, the increase is also observable in manufacturing and in market-oriented services sectors (Eurofound, 2010).

Looking at the sector distribution of part-time workers from the workers' point of view, the EWCS (2005) found the most significant proportion of part-timers in households working, for example, as gardeners, cooks or cleaners and in membership organisations (such as trade unions, employers' organisations). Apart from these two sectors there is significant part-time work to be found in recreation, culture and

sport (35%), in health and social work, retail and other services (all 28%) and hotels and restaurants (27%). Although the ECS shows that the majority of companies employ at least one part-time worker in sectors such as financial intermediation and real estate and business, the EWCS shows that the overall proportion of part-time workers in these sectors is lower than average, at 13% and 17% respectively.

**Figure 8: Part-time work reported in different sectors, EU27, EWCS 2005**



Source: European Working Conditions Survey (2005)

### Part time and gender in European companies

The EWCS found that 29% of women in the EU27 work part-time compared with 7% of men (corresponding to the 2005 figures of the LFS).

Many of the sectors shown above with the highest incidence of part-time work are essentially female-dominated. Some 78% of employees in health and social work and 71% of employees working in education are women. At the same time, sectors such as recreation, culture and sport are more balanced in terms of the workers' gender. In these sectors the higher incidence of part-time may be explained with the cyclical nature of the work. In the case of commerce, which often has a high concentration of women in retail, but also a high concentration of men in wholesale, both the gender factor and the more easily predictable workload play a role in the relatively high part-time rate.

The ECS asked management representatives of companies about the approximate proportion of female employees in their organisation. When comparing the proportion of female workers and the proportion of part-time workers in companies (see Table 2), it is obvious that the higher the proportion of women working in an establishment, the higher the proportion of part-time workers, reflecting the strong gender imbalance of part-time work. For example, three quarters of companies with no female workers and half of those with less than 20% female workforce have no part-timers. At the same time, around 80% of female-dominated companies (women representing more than 60% of the workforce) have at least one part-time worker, and the higher the proportion of women, the higher the incidence of part-time work.

Table 2: Female employees and part-time workers in companies, EU27

		Proportion of part-timers							Total
		No part-timers	Less than 20%	20% to 40%	40% to 60%	60% to 80%	80% to <100%	All workers are part-timers	
Proportion of females	No females	77%	16%	4%	1%	0%	0%	1%	100%
	Less than 20%	49%	45%	4%	1%	0%	1%	0%	100%
	20% to 40%	37%	46%	13%	2%	1%	0%	1%	100%
	40% to 60%	29%	43%	18%	6%	2%	2%	1%	100%
	60% to 80%	19%	38%	22%	10%	5%	4%	1%	100%
	80% to <100%	21%	29%	20%	10%	9%	9%	2%	100%
	All workers are female	19%	24%	24%	7%	14%	9%	5%	100%
<b>Total</b>		33%	39%	15%	5%	4%	3%	1%	100%

Source: European Company Survey (2009)

### Transitions from part time into full time

Looking at gender and age, the EWCS (2005) found that male part-time work is most common in the youngest (14%) and the oldest (10%) age groups, while it is very uncommon for the 30–49 years age group. This reflects a life course pattern explained in Chapter 1. Conversely, the survey found that female part-time work increases with age, reflecting more women in part-time jobs during the childbearing age and suggesting gender inequalities in terms of the ability to move from part time to full time.

In the ESWT (2004–2005) managers were asked about the possibility of switching from part time to full time. Regulation of this reversibility between forms of work differs from country to country. At one side of the scale in some countries it is a statutory right of employees to increase (or decrease) their working hours, while in other countries this is more difficult. In some countries (for example Sweden and France, see Appendix 1) many part-timers would prefer to work longer hours, and in other countries some full-time workers would like to be able to reduce their working hours.

On average, 27% of managers in the 21 countries included in the ESWT reported that part-time employees could easily get a full-time job while the same proportion said that there was ‘no chance’ of this happening. The remaining 43% said that this could happen only exceptionally. Countries where the highest proportion of managers said that this could be done quickly included the Czech Republic, Cyprus, Italy and Belgium (Eurofound, 2010).

## Part time and working conditions

### The concept of job quality and part time

Since the Lisbon Strategy formulated in 2000, the objectives of the European Employment Strategy include promoting the quality of work. The *Employment in Europe* report (2008) outlines some of the concerns about the decrease in the quality of jobs. Reasons included down-sizing and outsourcing, an increased use of temporary work, skill-biased technological progress and difficulties concerning the alignment of work and private life. The report suggests measuring job quality on the basis of wages

and socio-economic security, working conditions and work intensity, skills and training and finally reconciliation of work with family life (including gender equality aspects). Generally all attempts to define part-time job quality include the criterion that a good quality part-time job should provide the same (pro-rata) terms and conditions and training and development opportunities as a comparable full-time job (Lyonette, 2010).

The EWCS, a tool originally set up to help the improvement of quality of work in Europe, defines key dimensions of quality of work and employment as:

- career and employment security;
- health and well-being;
- skills development;
- reconciling work-life balance.

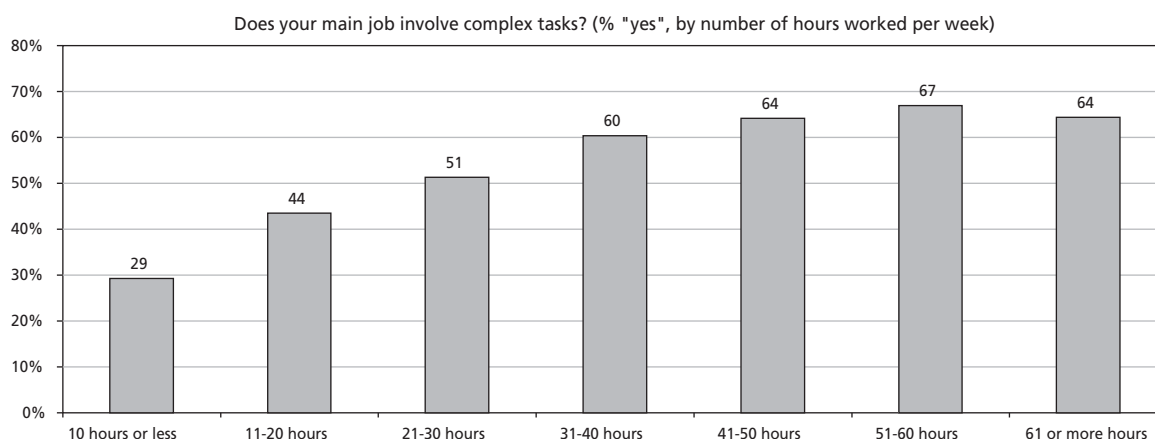
This report provides some analysis on the nature of tasks performed, prospects for career advancement, training possibilities and some elements of job satisfaction while focusing on the differences between those working shorter and longer working hours.

### Nature of tasks

Previous studies have shown that the tasks performed by a part-time worker are different from those performed by an equivalent full-time employee. A survey of full-time workers carried out by McDonald, Brandley & Brown (2009) found that the types of projects suitable for part-time work are regarded to have ‘standard specifications’ and ‘lower service delivery expectations’. Their report concluded that the responsibilities of part-time workers are viewed by full-timers as more routine and standardised, which is likely to have a significant impact on career development.

These findings are confirmed by the results of the EWCS. Some 43% of respondents working part-time reported that their job involves complex tasks, compared with 62% of full-timers. When looking at the specific number of hours worked it is clear that respondents working longer hours also more frequently work on complex tasks (see Figure 9). This trend continues up to 60 hours worked per week, with 67% of those working between 51 and 60 hours performing complex tasks.

**Figure 9: Complexity of tasks and working hours**



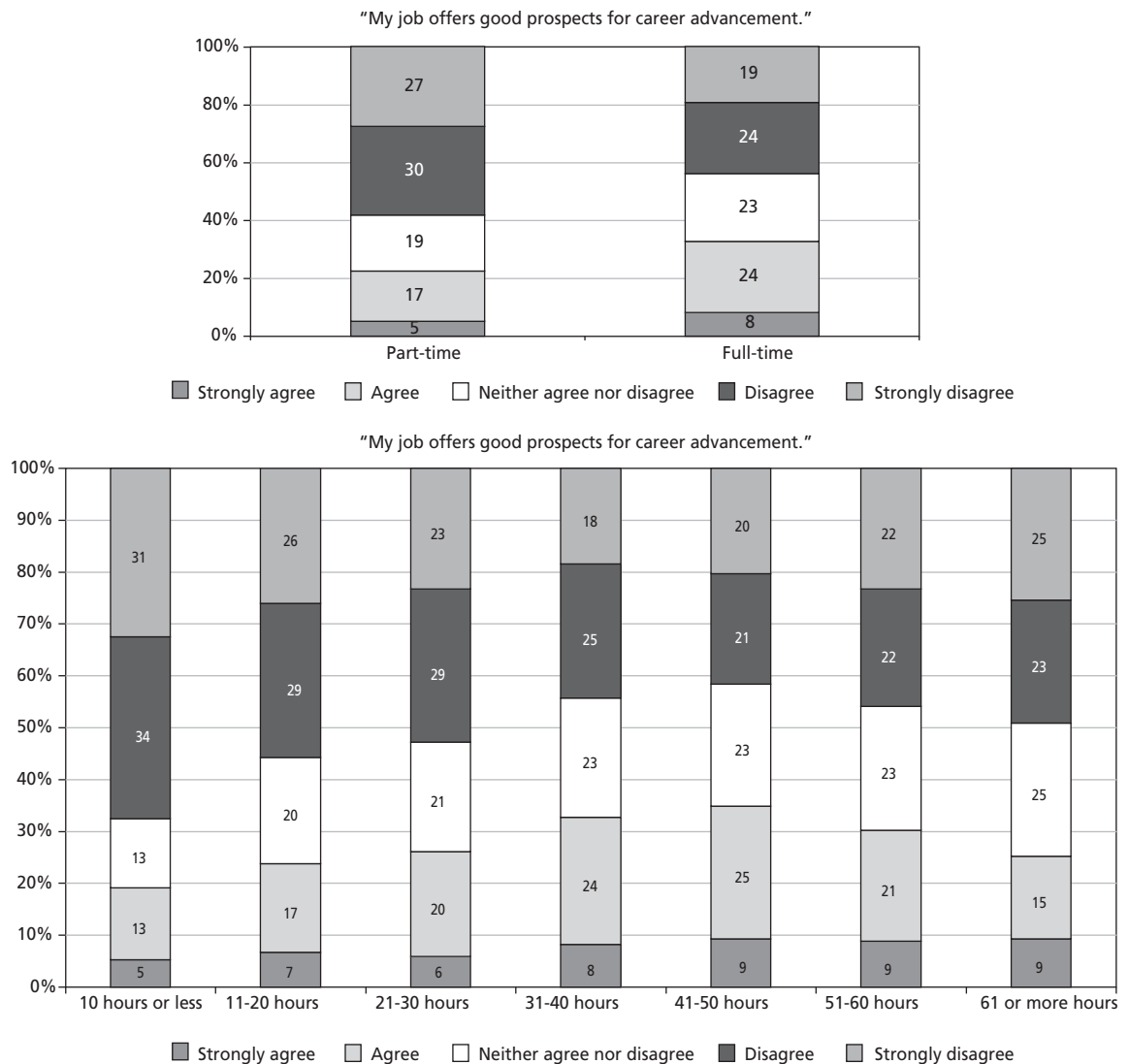
Source: European Working Conditions Survey (2005)

However, when looking at short, repetitive task of less than one minute or less than ten minutes, the difference between part-time workers and full-time workers was less prominent (around two percentage points in both cases). Similarly, part-timers were only slightly more likely to perform monotonous tasks (three percentage points).

**Career advancement**

On average, part-time workers are less likely to feel that their job offers good prospects for career advancement (see Figure 10). The difference between the two groups is as high as 10 percentage points.

**Figure 10: Career prospects and working time**



Source: European Working Conditions Survey (2005)

Analysis by the number of hours worked per week shows that employees working between 41 and 50 hours are most likely to be optimistic about their career prospects (34%), followed by those working 31 to 40 hours (32%). Those working less are significantly less likely to say they have good opportunities for promotion, and this proportion decreases in line with the number of hours worked.

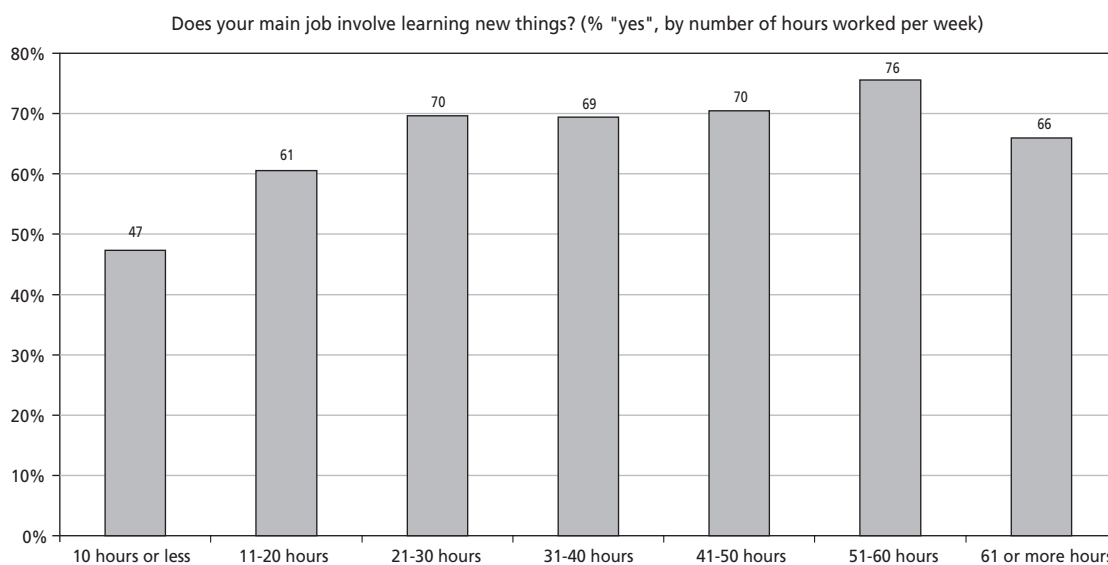
### Training and learning

The EWCS found that while part-time workers are less likely to receive training paid for by their employer than full-time workers, the difference is relatively low at five percentage points and the main finding is that access to training is generally low at EU level (less than 30% – see Eurofound, 2007). Interestingly, when looking at training received in terms of hours worked, those working between 21 and 30 hours per week were the most likely to receive training (31%), while only a small proportion of those working less than this had access to training (10% in the case of those working less than 10 hours and 19% of those working 11–20 hours). Access to training for those working 31 hours or more was near the EU average at 28%.

It is likely that the global economic recession of 2009–2010 had an impact on access to training in many European organisations. Findings of the 2010 EWCS will provide more information on this subject.

When asked whether their job involves learning new things, there is little difference among people working more than 21 hours per week, with 70% to 76% agreeing with this statement. However, only 47% of those working 10 hours or less and 61% of those working between 11 and 20 hours say that they have the opportunity to learn something new at work.

**Figure 11: Learning new things and working hours**

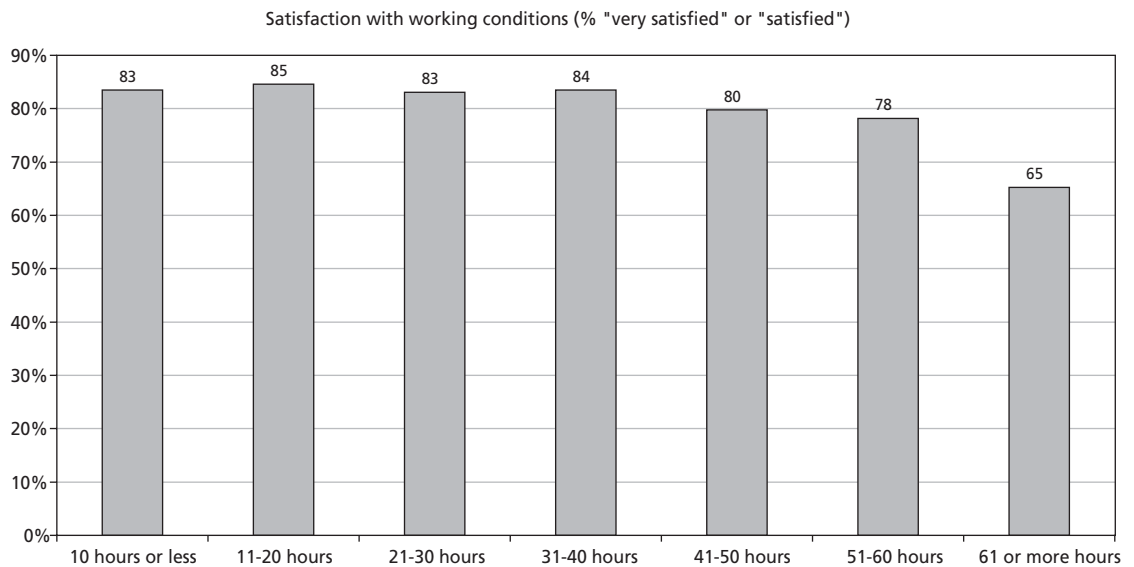


Source: European Working Conditions Survey (2005)

### Satisfaction with working conditions

Part-time workers' satisfaction with their working conditions is very similar to that of full-time workers, as around 82% of both groups report that they are either satisfied or very satisfied with their conditions of work. Looking at different hours worked per week the EWCS found that up to 40 hours worked per week, satisfaction with working conditions is independent of working hours, with 83% to 85% reporting that they are 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied'. On the other hand, those working more than 40 hours are less likely to be satisfied with their working conditions (see Figure 12).

**Figure 12: Satisfaction and working hours**

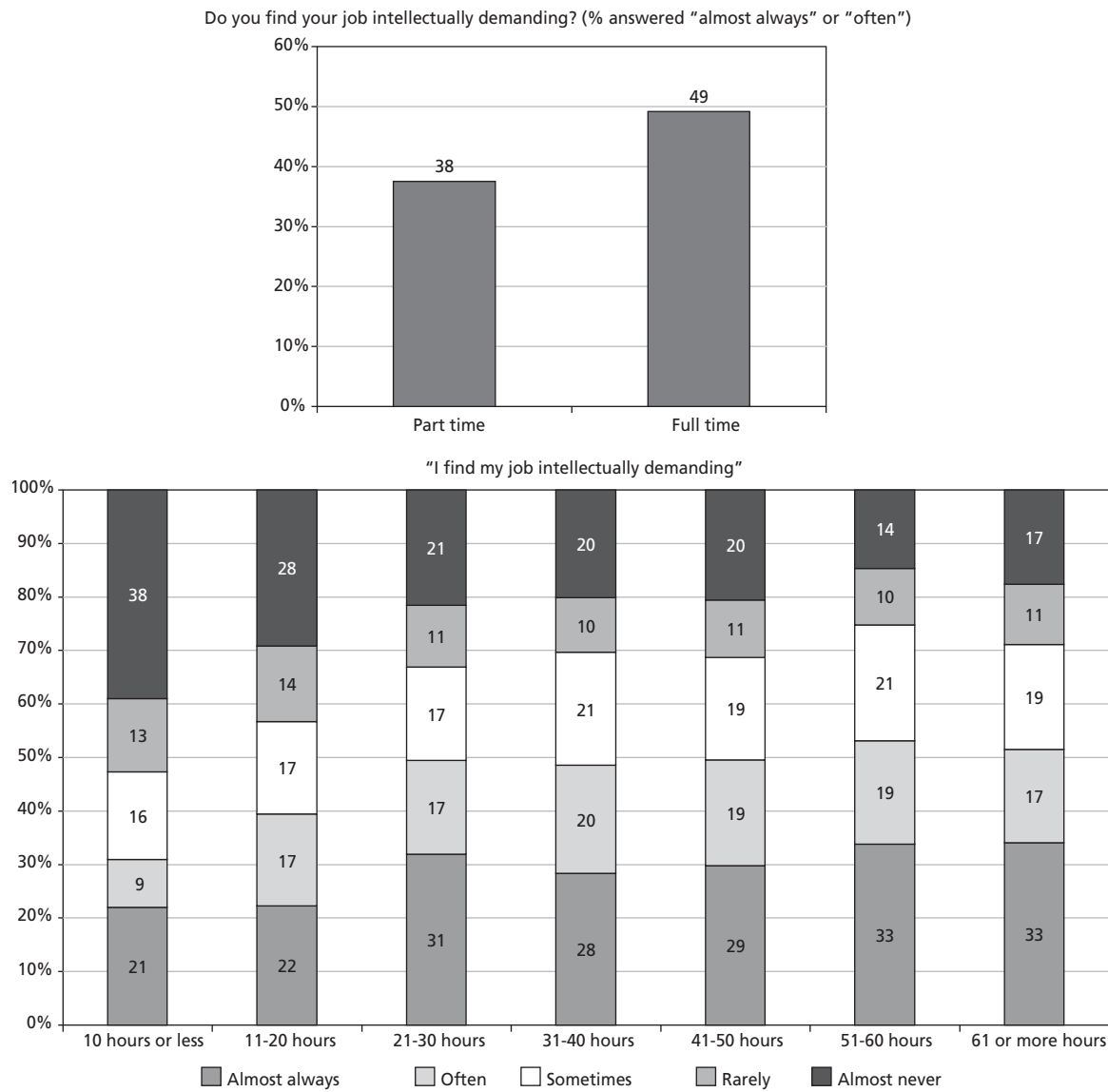


Source: European Working Conditions Survey (2005)

As part of measuring satisfaction with working conditions, the EWCS asked questions concerning psychological well-being at work. One of these questions concerned the intellectually demanding nature of work. The survey found a significant difference between part-time and full-time workers in this case with 49% of full-timers and just 38% of part-timers finding their job intellectually demanding. The proportion of those not finding their job intellectually demanding decreases with the number of hours worked, however, those working 21–30, 31–40 and 41–50 hours have very similar rates.

When respondents were asked on their ‘feeling of doing useful work’, however, there is very little difference between part-time workers (53%) and full-time workers (55%). The difference remains small when looking at the specific number of hours worked per week. Similarly, part-timers are just as likely as full-timers to ‘have the opportunity to do what they do best’ (both 41%).

Figure 13: Intellectual demands and working hours



Source: European Working Conditions Survey (2005)

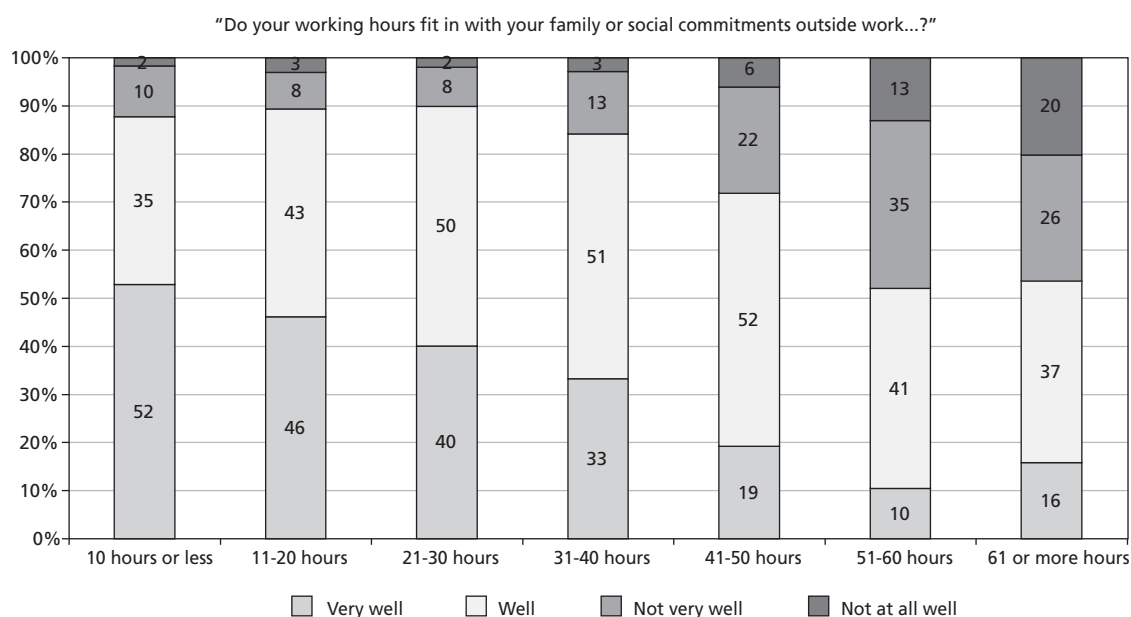
However, when asked whether they ‘have the opportunity to learn and grow’, part-time workers again seem to be at a disadvantage: 45% said that they ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’ with this statement, compared with 54% of full-time workers.

**Reconciliation of work and family/social life**

Based on the strong connection between part-time work, gender and work–life balance described above, those working shorter hours are expected to be more satisfied with the balance between their job and their life outside the workplace. When respondents were asked how well their working hours fit their family or social commitments outside work, those working shorter hours (30 hours or less per week) were much less likely to respond ‘not very well’ or ‘not at all well’ than those working full-time. Those working more than 50 hours per week were the least satisfied with their work–life balance, with almost half expressing dissatisfaction with their working hours in this regard.



Figure 14: Work-life balance and working hours



Source: European Working Conditions Survey (2005)

Answers to this question varied according to the gender of the respondent. Females working the least number of hours in a week (those working less than 20, and especially those working less than 10 hours) were more likely to be satisfied with their work-life balance, than men working such hours. The analysis does not take into account any other factors affecting life satisfaction. The difference between the answers of men and women was very small for those working between 21 and 30 hours, which is a group consisting of the majority of part-time workers surveyed in the EWCS, as well as for full-time workers working between 31 and 50 hours. This seems to suggest that the importance of the work-life balance aspect with regards to working hours is not all that different for men and women.

Generally, the findings of the 2005 EWCS seem to highlight differences between the working conditions of part-time workers and full-time workers in Europe, and this way it confirms the findings of other reports that suggest full-time workers tend to have better working conditions and better prospects for career progress than part-time workers (Zeytinoglu, 2008, McDonald, Bradley and Brown, 2009, Lyonette, 2010 et al). The main differences highlighted by the EWCS are:

- the complexity of tasks;
- hopes for career advancement;
- access to training;
- the opportunity to learn and grow;
- the intellectually demanding nature of the job.

The next EWCS may highlight changes affected by the economic recession in 2009 and 2010.

# Part-time work in highly qualified (professional) and management positions

Part-time workers in professional jobs have recently become the focus of many studies. The main reason behind this is this kind of arrangement is less common, especially in those jobs that include management responsibilities. Career prospects in a highly competitive environment are less favourable when an employee is trying to balance work and family life through reducing his/her working hours, and other studies confirm that those working part-time are less likely to be promoted (Eurofound, 2004, McGovern, 2004, Zeytinoglu, 2010).

Some employees seem to support the idea that supervisory positions or those requiring high qualifications should be available to full-time workers only. According to a report by McDonald, Bradley and Brown (2009), due to the view that more hours worked represent more commitment to the organisation, many full-time workers believe that reduced-hours workers should not have the opportunity to apply for senior positions, especially supervisory roles.

Other studies also found that employees think that part-time and professional/management roles do not belong together. In the United States, which is characterised by a culture of long working hours, Webber and Williams (2008) examined the different motivations of professional workers and less qualified workers to work part time. They distributed employees into 'retention' workers and 'secondary' workers. Retention workers were defined as highly educated and in highly paid jobs where part-time work schedules are rare. Typically, they began on a full-time basis and later negotiated a reduction in work hours. Secondary workers in contrast, are hired on a part-time basis for jobs with low wages and a high turnover of employees, typically in the service sector. Webber and Williams found that professional workers viewed part time as a reward for years of excellent service, and reluctantly accepted the career penalties associated with part time, regarding them as temporary setbacks. They aspired to return to the career ladder after working part time, generally for family reasons. For less well qualified workers, Webber and Williams concluded that part time is the norm and they aspired to become full-time housewives more than full-time workers.

In most sectors (see sector differences below) it is rare that a part-time job is advertised in a highly skilled occupation or for a management role. More commonly, part-time work in these roles arises through highly skilled individuals reducing their working hours, usually to take care of family responsibilities, which is often labelled as 'occupational downgrading'. Because of the limited number of part-time options available in highly qualified positions, the reduction of working hours often means moving back to a position for which the individual is overqualified. Based on a review of research in the UK, Lyonette et al (2010) suggest that around 25% of women who move from full-time to part-time work change to an occupation where the average qualification level is below that of their previous full-time job. In addition, they find that those most likely to downgrade are women working in smaller-scale managerial positions, and that half of these women give up their managerial responsibilities and revert to standard personal service or sales assistant jobs, well below their skill levels. Apart from giving up their management responsibilities, these employees are likely to reduce their earnings by, on average, 32%, and when (and if) they move back to full-time, the increase in earnings is just around 19%.

Nevertheless, taking into account that in some countries in Europe part-time work is very common, there is a possibility that in some sectors, and in some countries, part-time work in highly qualified

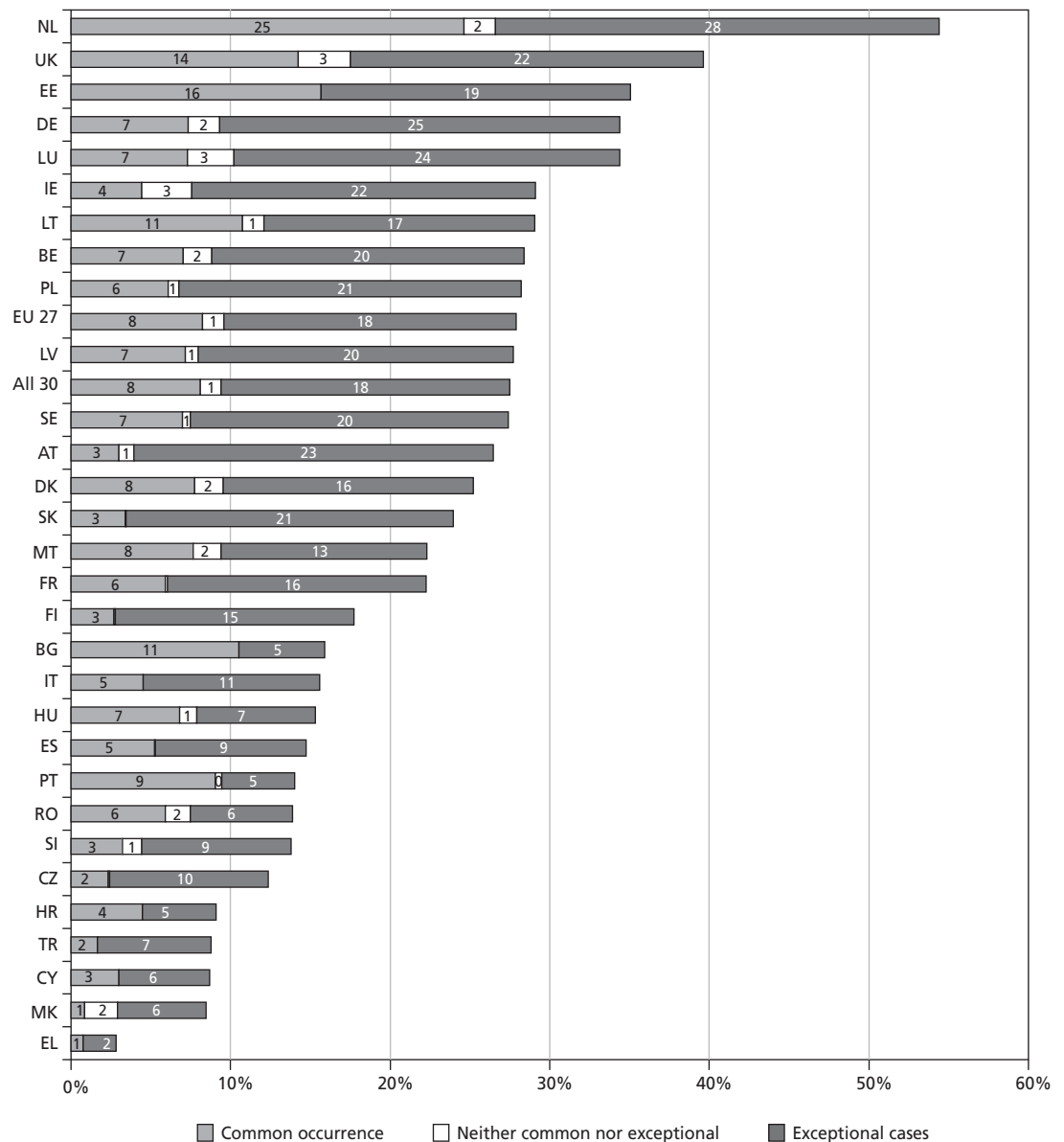
(professional) positions and in management roles is a more common phenomenon than elsewhere. This chapter reviews the findings of the ECS and the EWCS in this regard.

### Highly qualified part-time workers in European companies

In the 2009 ECS, company HR managers were asked whether any of their staff in highly qualified positions or in positions with a supervisory role worked part-time. Overall in the EU27 sample the proportion of companies that replied ‘yes’ was 26%. Three quarters of European companies therefore do not have any part-time workers in positions that need high qualifications or management experience.

**Figure 15: Part-time in high qualified and management roles by country**

Are any of your staff in highly qualified positions or in positions with a supervisory role working part-time? (% answering “yes”)



Source: European Company Survey (2009)

In the Netherlands, where part-time work is most common, the proportion of companies that reportedly have highly qualified part-time positions is 47%, which is the highest rate in the EU. This proportion was also higher than average in the UK, Germany, and Luxembourg, countries where part-time is relatively common. It was also relatively high in Estonia, Lithuania and Poland, even though the proportion of companies here employing part-timers is lower than average. At the same time, Greece had the lowest proportion (3%) of companies employing part-timers in highly qualified or management positions, followed by Cyprus (10%).

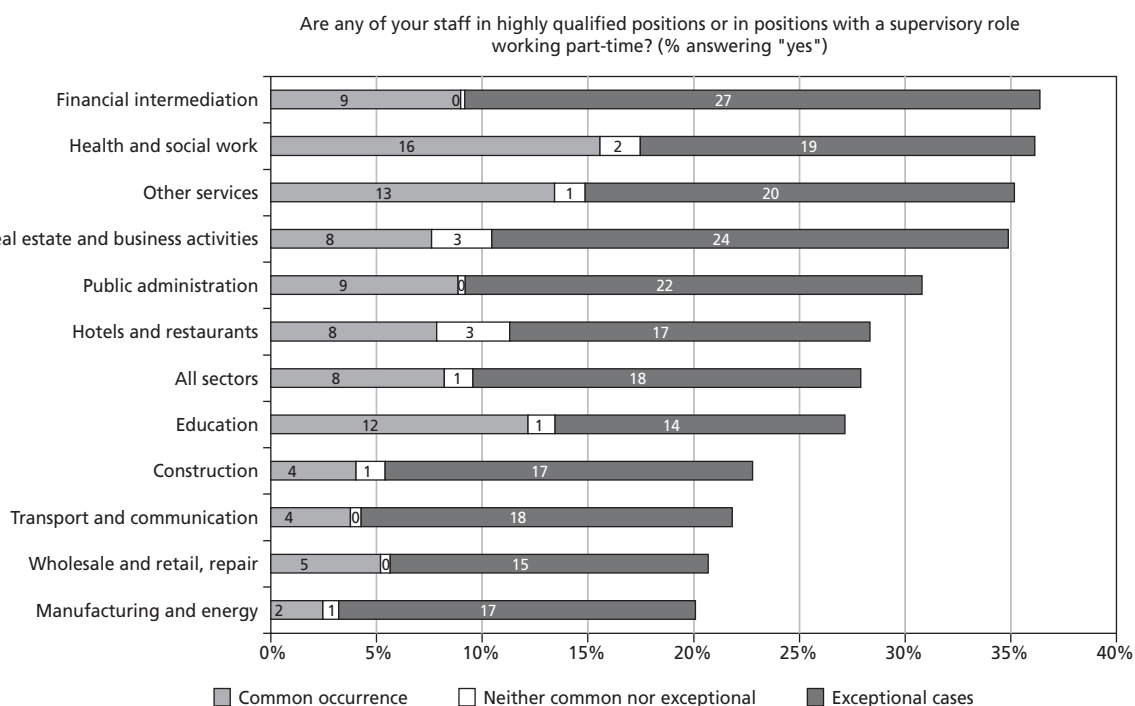
About two thirds of companies that do employ part-timers in these positions report that these are exceptional cases. The remaining 30% said that this is a common phenomenon in the company. Country analysis is difficult in this context due to the small number of companies involved.

### Sector differences

Results of the ECS show that the incidence of managers and professionals working part-time is highest in financial intermediation, health and social work, other services, and in real estate and business. In all of these sectors 35% to 37% of HR managers said that these types of positions exist within their company. The survey went on to show that this was a common phenomenon in these areas, not just a few exceptional cases.

Companies in the wholesale and retail sector, as well as transport and communication and construction were less likely to employ professionals and managers working part-time.

Figure 16: Part time in highly qualified and management roles by sector



Source: European Company Survey (2009)

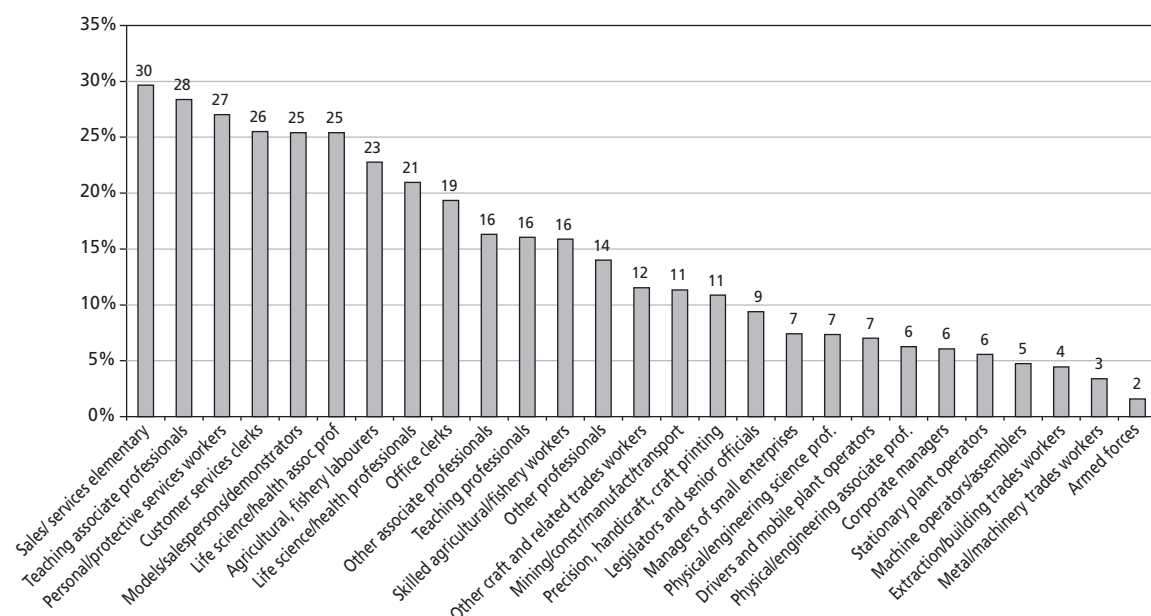
In order to consider the employees' point of view, it is possible to look at part-time work in terms of different occupations and qualifications and to analyse in which sectors managers and professionals are able to work part-time. Analysis by qualifications is the more problematic of the two – a person with high qualifications working part-time is not necessarily working in a position he/she is qualified for. Nevertheless, the 2005 EWCS showed that only 5% of respondents are part-time workers with post-secondary qualifications. The sectors where this group represents a high proportion of total workers are membership organisations (19%), computer and related activities (15%), education (13%), health (13%), research and development (11%), and recreation and sport (11%).

### Part time and occupations

According to the results of the 2005 EWCS, 17% of the total EU27 workforce work part-time (in line with the 2005 Labour Force Survey data). The largest proportion of these part-time workers (17%) are employed in sales and services elementary occupations, with a further 12% being personal and protective services workers and another 10% working as office clerks.

It is also possible to look at the different occupations to see the proportion of part-timers within them (see Figure 17). The size of some occupation groups in the survey sample is relatively low, which is not accounted for in this analysis. Results show that part-time work is most common within the sales and services elementary occupation group, where as much as 30% of the employees work part-time. Part-time work is also very common in teaching at 28%, as well as within personal and protective services workers at 27%. However it is very rare in the armed forces as well as among machine operators and trades workers in manufacturing and construction.

Figure 17: Part-time within occupational groups (%)



Source: European Working Conditions Survey (2005)

Within professional and associate professional occupations part-time work is only relatively common in teaching, where 28% of associate professionals but just 16% of professionals work part-time, and in

life sciences and health, where 25% of associate professionals and 21% of professionals work part-time. Part-time employment is very rare among, for example, legislators and senior officials (9%), managers of small companies (7%) and corporate managers (6%).

Analysis by countries is very difficult in this case, due to the number of respondents working part-time in professional and management occupations being insignificant in almost all countries. In a very few countries, all of which have part-time rates considerably higher than average, a significant number of part-time workers were among those interviewed within teaching and in life sciences occupations, but part time among managers was negligible in all countries.

When looking at the findings of the two surveys together, it can be observed that while across the EU27 26% of companies have part-time workers in professional or management positions, and 30% of these companies (8% of all companies) claim that this is a common phenomenon in the organisation, the EWCS suggests that these kinds of part-time positions are only relatively common in the education and the health sector and in occupations associated with these sectors (life sciences and teaching professionals). At the same time, companies in other sectors, such as finance and real estate have also reported the existence of part-time jobs in these occupations in their organisation.

The findings of the two surveys suggest that part-time work in professional (highly qualified) and management positions is still incidental across the EU27 as a whole. In countries where part-time work is common, more companies report the existence and the frequency of part time, however, the survey concentrating on workers has only been able to confirm this in the case of the education and the health sector.



# Conclusions

Part-time work is carried out for many different reasons, reflecting the interest of workers, employers, or both. When looking at the advantages and disadvantages of part-time work, it is important to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary part-time, taking into account the 'hidden' involuntary part-timers trapped in this form of work due to lack of other options. Research shows that part-time work has a series of different consequences for employees, employers and the economy as a whole. For example, part-time work is understood to increase female participation in the labour force, and therefore has a positive effect on the employment rate. It allows employers to adjust their resources to cyclical conditions over the course of a day/week/month/year and it also allows businesses to respond to the economic cycle. For employees it may be a solution to maintaining their work-life balance, enabling parents to spend more time with their children while remaining in employment.

At the same time, part-time work may increase overall labour costs for businesses due to the presence of fixed costs. Employees working part-time have lower earnings and fewer possibilities, on average, for career progression. Some results suggest that the quality of part-time jobs is on average lower, although the job satisfaction of part-time workers is, on the whole, similar to that of full-time workers.

The scale of part-time in the European workforce has increased in the last two decades at a similar rate for men and women. However, large differences remain in part-time work across European countries. Some societies integrated part-time work into the whole workforce, absorbing the negative consequences as well as the negative associations with part-time work. In these countries women are significantly more likely to work part-time than men. At the same time, part-time work remains insignificant in many countries, for a variety of legal, economic and cultural reasons.

Across European companies, part-time work is most common in education, health and social work, all of which are female-dominated sectors. Generally, a higher proportion of female workers result in a higher incidence of part time in many companies. Part-time work is most often done at fixed hours every day. However, other forms of part time are becoming more common, increasing the range of possibilities for employers and employees.

While male part-time work is most common in the youngest and the oldest age groups, the female part-time rate increases with age, reflecting gender inequalities in transitions from part time to full time.

Although part-time workers are generally satisfied with their jobs, they are less likely to receive training, and they are less optimistic about their career prospects than full-time workers. In addition, they are less likely to find their job intellectually demanding and less likely to carry out complex tasks.

In some companies part-time work has become more common among those working in professional or management positions that need high qualifications. However, across the whole workforce this is still rare, and limited to sectors where part-time work is most common (especially health and education) and in occupations associated with these sectors.





# Appendices

## Appendix 1 - Some country examples

### Germany

#### Characteristics and history of part-time in Germany

Part-time work in Germany is regarded as beneficial to the economy and is promoted, with employers, employees, political parties and the government all having a positive stance towards it (Sciarra, 2004).

Legal regulation of part-time work began in 1985, when the Promotion of Employment Act banned discrimination against part-time workers. The promotion of part-time work strengthened in the 1990s when employees recognised this work form as an opportunity to balance work and family life. Employers responded positively, viewing part time as a way of improving flexibility. As the government also supported this movement, it is unsurprising that the Framework Agreement was welcomed in Germany (Sciarra, 2004).

In 2000 a new act introduced a right for employees in companies employing more than 15 people to reduce their working time, as long as no internal reasons prevent this. By this time the part-time rate in Germany had reached 20% and was most commonly practiced by partnered women with children (EIRO). The new act intended to promote part time among men, to contribute to equal opportunities between genders.

Employers have found the act too restrictive. Nevertheless, the act was followed by a further 6% increase in the part-time rate in Germany. The male part-time rate increased by over 4% compared with an EU average increase of just 1.5% over the same time. Nevertheless, the even larger increase in women working part-time meant that the gap between the male and female part-time rate increased from 33% to 36%. Thus, while the act succeeded in promoting part-time work, it seems to have failed to achieve its goal of a more even gender balance.

## Hungary

### Characteristics of part-time work in Hungary

Before the political and economic transition, part-time work was almost non-existent in Hungary. Since the Employment Promotion Act of 1991, which allows subsidies for part-time employment, there has been a slight increase in the part-time rate but it remains significantly below the EU average. The difference between the male and female part-time rate is very low. The labour market is relatively inflexible, both demand and supply concentrating on either eight-hour full-time or four/six-hour part-time jobs. Furthermore, it is a relatively common phenomenon to work on a part-time contract while working full-time and receiving full-time pay on an undeclared basis. This 'pseudo' part-time is often involuntary, carried out on the basis of oral agreements with the employer, and is especially common in low-wage industries.

Collective agreements have so far played hardly any role in the regulation of working time and increasing flexibility. The transformation period of the last two decades posed a barrier to an active tripartite system.

### New legislative developments

The amended Labour Code of 2003 incorporates the EU Part-time Directive and thus prohibits discrimination against part-time workers. This makes efforts to evade the minimum wage law through employing 'pseudo' part-time workers illegal.

Another important amendment to the Hungarian labour law took place in 2009. Since the beginning of 2010 it is now compulsory in the public sector to provide part-time employment on a 20-hours weekly basis to employees returning from maternity leave, at least until their child is three years old. This move has received some criticism for not being applied to the private sector. However, while childcare provision is free in Hungary, there have been doubts over the state-run childcare system being able to deal with the demand from a significantly increased number of mothers working part-time.

## Netherlands

### Characteristics of part-time in the Netherlands

Rather than being restricted to marginal jobs, part-time working in the Netherlands is embedded in mainstream employment. The majority of working women in the country have a part-time job. While 40% of female part-time workers are mothers of young children (Bussemaker 1998), almost half are over 40 years old with no young children. Partnered women in part-time have a high job satisfaction, and only 3% of female part-timers would prefer full-time work (Booth and van Ours, 2010). Most taxes in the Netherlands are neutral to working hours and social security payments are applied to part-time workers pro rata.

### Preferences

Research in the Netherlands shows that while many women in 'short' part-time jobs would like to work longer hours, many of those in 'longer' part-time jobs would prefer to work shorter hours, with on average 20–27 hours of weekly work preferred. Across the whole workforce, most partnered individuals working long hours would prefer to work less, while those working short hours would prefer to work more. Booth and van Ours (2010) calculate that, in 2005, the equilibrium hours of work would have been 21.7 hours for women, and 32.5 hours for men.

### Reasons for increase in part-time

The Netherlands has seen a gradual change in policy removing barriers to part-time work, and there has been a conscious effort to make part-time work more attractive:

- In 1993 minimum wage and social security were granted for jobs with working hours below a third of a normal working week.
- In 1995 the first collective agreement for temporary workers was signed.
- A 2000 law established the right to part-time work.
- The 2001 tax reform resulted in some women reducing their working hours to receive a higher hourly wage after tax.

As a result of these steps, as well as an increased demand for non-standard working hours by employers, part-time work has been increasing in the Netherlands since the 1990s. At the same time, average working hours remained stable as part-time work increased at the expense of full-time and 'shorter' part-time (Bosch et al 2008).

## Portugal

### Part-time trends in Portugal

The Portuguese part-time rate is below the EU average at 12%. However, unlike many other countries, this is accompanied by an employment rate that is slightly higher than average at 68%. As in most other pre-2004 Member States, most part-timers are women. However, the vast majority (85%) of working women in Portugal have a full-time job. There has been virtually no change in the female part-time rate over the past decade, while the male part-time rate increased somewhat, resulting in a narrowing gender gap.

At the same time, many women regard their working hours as a major barrier to spending more time with their children, or to having larger families (OECD, 2004), which is reflected by Portugal's low fertility rate of 1.5 children per woman.

### Legal context

There are no active or passive state incentives to work part-time in Portugal, and part-time work isn't generally regulated, except for measures aimed at equality among men and women, and the adoption of the EU Directives. In addition, parents of children under 12 years of age are entitled to part-time work, but such arrangements are rare in practice. Trade unions strongly oppose involuntary part time.

The main reason behind the high female full-time rate is that they simply cannot afford to reduce their working hours. Many parents therefore make use of paid childcare facilities. An OECD report (Babies and Bosses, 2004) recommended that Portuguese policymakers should reduce barriers to part-time work and strengthen support for low-income families.

**Slovenia****Part-time regulation in Slovenia**

After the declaration of independence in 1991, Slovenia adopted a new law in Labour Relationships (LLR) laying down relatively vaguely a right to work part-time, aimed at those who would like to do this for childcare reasons. These rules were made more specific with an amendment in 2003. The new LLR now states that part-time workers have the right to participate in company management, they are allowed to work part-time for more than one employer (thus working full-time overall), and workers have a right to switch to part time under certain circumstances (for example in order to use part-time parental leave).

**Recent trends in part-time work**

Slovenia has the second highest part-time rate across the NMS at 9%, which is still significantly below the EU average. There has been an increase of about 3% since 2000, which is relatively high across new Member States. The regulation of part-time work is gendered, concentrating on mothers. Research suggests (EIRO, 2003) that there is some demand for part-time work, both for parents of young children and for other population groups, and this demand increases with the education level. At the same time, as in many other new Member States, the main barrier to working part-time is the need to receive full-time pay to achieve an acceptable standard of living. Across many sectors part-time work is increasingly common for students, who pose significantly lower expense to the employer than an average worker. This has a negative effect on the employability of young people who have recently graduated, which in turn encourages students to postpone their graduation. Student work is not included in the official part-time figures, but represents a relatively significant rate of hidden part-time work.

## Sweden

### **Characteristics of part-time in Sweden**

The part-time rate in Sweden is the second highest in Europe at 26.6%, and the difference between the male and the female part-time rates is considerable. In Sweden a high percentage of women are part-timers throughout their entire acting working life (Sciarra, 2004). Unusually, women working part-time are earning as much as women working full-time (Bardasi, 2008).

### **Preferences**

Many women in Sweden doing part-time work would like to work more hours (EIRO, 2009), and thus they are sometimes labelled as ‘part-time unemployed’ as they are adjusting to labour market needs. This high proportion of involuntary part-timers has been subject to government debate for the past 20 years, with considerable efforts made to help them.

### **Reasons for the high part-time rate**

The increase in part-time work started with a series of reforms in the 1970s. These gave women independence of taxation from their spouses’ income and abolished a strict closing hours law. During these years part-time work was a means for women to enter the labour market. However, during the 1990s two important acts were passed (the Employment Protection Act and the Working Hours Act – later replaced by a collective agreement). Both set out to reduce involuntary part-time, and increase voluntary part-time. Part-time workers in Sweden are now entitled to increase their working hours if there is a need for increased labour in the company. As a result, Sweden was one of the very few countries experiencing a decrease in the part-time rate at the end of the 1990s (Eurofound, 2004).

This trend turned after the implementation of the EU Part-time Directive in 2002, and the past eight years brought a further increase in part-time work in Sweden. In 2005 a government initiative, the Full Project, explored involuntary part-time work and provided suggestions to change the existing work organisation.

**UK****History of part-time work in the UK**

Public policy in the UK was for a long time distinctly gendered, first based on a male breadwinner/female home-carer model, which then shifted to a male breadwinner/female part-time carer model (Sciarra, 2004). Between 1975 and 1995 those working less than eight hours per week were disqualified from many statutory rights, while those working between eight and 16 hours had to demonstrate five years of continuous employment to qualify for these rights. During these years, in line with the government policy, part-timers were usually given worse terms and conditions of employment than full-time workers, generally being the first ones to be made redundant. Part-time workers were therefore crowded into the low-wage sectors of the economy.

**Characteristics of part-time work**

The UK is characterised by a long-working-hours culture, while formal childcare is expensive. For this reason, the UK has one of the highest part-time rates in Europe, and it is highly gendered.

**New developments**

The Part-time Workers (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations came into effect in 2000, which assures equal contractual rights, equal pay and equal benefits to part-time workers. The Employment Act of 2002 introduced the right of parents of young children (from 2009 including children up to the age of 16) to request flexible working hours. However, occupational downgrading for part-time workers is very common in the UK, resulting in a significant gender pay gap. During the economic recession of 2009, while full-time employment decreased, part-time work considerably increased in the UK, possibly as a result of many employees being forced to reduce their working hours (Lyonette et al, 2010).



## Appendix 2 - Labour Force Survey data tables

### Male and female part-time rates in EU27 countries

	Males		Females	
	1999	2009	1999	2009
Belgium	5.1%	8.6%	42%	42%
Bulgaria	0.0%	2.0%	3%	3%
Czech Republic	2.4%	2.8%	9%	9%
Denmark	10.4%	15.3%	38%	38%
Germany	4.9%	9.7%	45%	45%
Estonia	5.9%	7.0%	14%	14%
Ireland	7.2%	10.5%	34%	34%
Greece	3.4%	3.2%	10%	10%
Spain	2.9%	4.9%	23%	23%
France	5.5%	6.0%	30%	30%
Italy	3.5%	5.1%	28%	28%
Cyprus	3.4%	5.2%	13%	13%
Latvia	11.0%	7.5%	10%	10%
Lithuania	0.0%	7.0%	10%	10%
Luxembourg	1.5%	5.6%	35%	35%
Hungary	2.4%	3.9%	8%	8%
Malta	0.0%	5.1%	24%	24%
Netherlands	18.0%	24.9%	76%	76%
Austria	4.2%	8.7%	43%	43%
Poland	8.0%	5.8%	12%	12%
Portugal	6.4%	7.5%	16%	16%
Romania	13.8%	9.1%	11%	11%
Slovenia	5.2%	8.4%	13%	13%
Slovakia	1.2%	2.7%	5%	5%
Finland	7.7%	9.2%	19%	19%
Sweden	8.0%	14.2%	41%	41%
United Kingdom	8.8%	11.8%	43%	43%
European Union (27 countries)	6.4%	8.3%	28.5%	32%

	Difference between male and female part time (2009, percentage points)
Netherlands	50.9
Germany	35.6
Austria	34.2
Belgium	32.9
United Kingdom	30.7
Luxembourg	29.5
Sweden	27.0
France	23.8
Ireland	23.3
European Union (27 countries)	23.2
Italy	22.8
Denmark	22.6
Malta	18.5
Spain	18.1
Finland	9.8
Portugal	8.9
Cyprus	7.3
Greece	7.2
Estonia	6.8
Czech Republic	6.4
Poland	5.8
Slovenia	4.8
Hungary	3.6
Latvia	2.7
Lithuania	2.5
Slovakia	2.0
Romania	1.5
Bulgaria	0.7

### Appendix 3 - ECS data tables

#### Proportion of employees working part-time in companies

MM250XN: Could you please give me a rough estimate by means of the following categories: None at all, Less than 20%, 20% to less than 40%, 40% to less than 60%, 60% to less than 80%, 80% to less than 100%, All

	None	<20%	20%-40%	40%-60%	60%-80%	80%-100%	All
NL	9%	37%	18%	13%	12%	10%	2%
BE	16%	42%	24%	8%	5%	3%	0%
DE	17%	40%	24%	8%	5%	5%	1%
UK	20%	39%	20%	8%	8%	4%	1%
SE	21%	41%	19%	5%	5%	6%	1%
AT	26%	42%	15%	11%	3%	2%	1%
IE	27%	39%	16%	8%	7%	2%	1%
DK	29%	39%	17%	8%	4%	3%	0%
MT	31%	42%	11%	7%	6%	2%	1%
FR	32%	38%	15%	5%	4%	4%	1%
Total	33%	39%	15%	5%	4%	3%	1%
IT	34%	50%	9%	3%	1%	2%	1%
PL	34%	47%	13%	3%	2%	2%	0%
LU	36%	43%	14%	5%	2%	1%	0%
LIT	37%	43%	13%	4%	3%	0%	0%
LV	40%	37%	13%	4%	2%	3%	1%
EE	44%	38%	10%	3%	1%	3%	1%
FI	45%	36%	7%	4%	4%	4%	0%
CZ	46%	40%	10%	2%	1%	1%	0%
ES	48%	36%	6%	3%	2%	2%	2%
HU	52%	35%	7%	2%	0%	2%	1%
RO	52%	37%	6%	2%	1%	1%	1%
SI	59%	38%	2%	0%	0%	0%	1%
CY	63%	26%	5%	3%	1%	0%	0%
SK	64%	27%	5%	2%	0%	1%	0%
EL	71%	17%	6%	2%	2%	1%	1%
PT	78%	15%	1%	1%	0%	1%	3%
BG	81%	13%	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%

**Staff in highly qualified positions or supervisory roles working part-time**

MM256: Are any of your staff in highly qualified positions or in positions with a supervisory role working part-time?

	Yes	No
NL	47%	53%
UK	35%	64%
DE	31%	69%
LU	29%	71%
EE	27%	73%
LIT	27%	73%
PL	27%	73%
IE	26%	74%
EU27	26%	74%
BE	25%	75%
SE	24%	76%
LV	24%	76%
SK	24%	75%
DK	22%	78%
AT	21%	79%
MT	20%	79%
FR	20%	80%
FI	17%	83%
BG	15%	84%
PT	14%	86%
IT	14%	86%
ES	14%	86%
HU	14%	86%
RO	14%	86%
SI	12%	87%
CZ	12%	88%
CY	10%	90%
EL	3%	97%



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*Non-standard employment and, more particularly, part-time work has been increasing worldwide for the past two decades. This trend has been especially strong in Europe, where the issue of different working time arrangements is an important part of the discussion among policymakers and social partners, and something which the European Union (EU) has promoted to increase flexibility for workers and employers. However, part-time work is spread very unevenly across Member States, reflecting differences in legislation, infrastructure and cultural conventions.*

*Using data from the fourth European Working Conditions Survey and the second Company Survey, this report looks at the advantages and disadvantages from the point of view of employers and workers. It analyses the use of part-time work with regards to gender, Member States, sectors and occupations and also looks at whether part-time work for highly-qualified professional and managerial positions has become a reality.*

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