

Job autonomy and pressure at work - statistics

Statistics Explained

Data extracted in September 2020

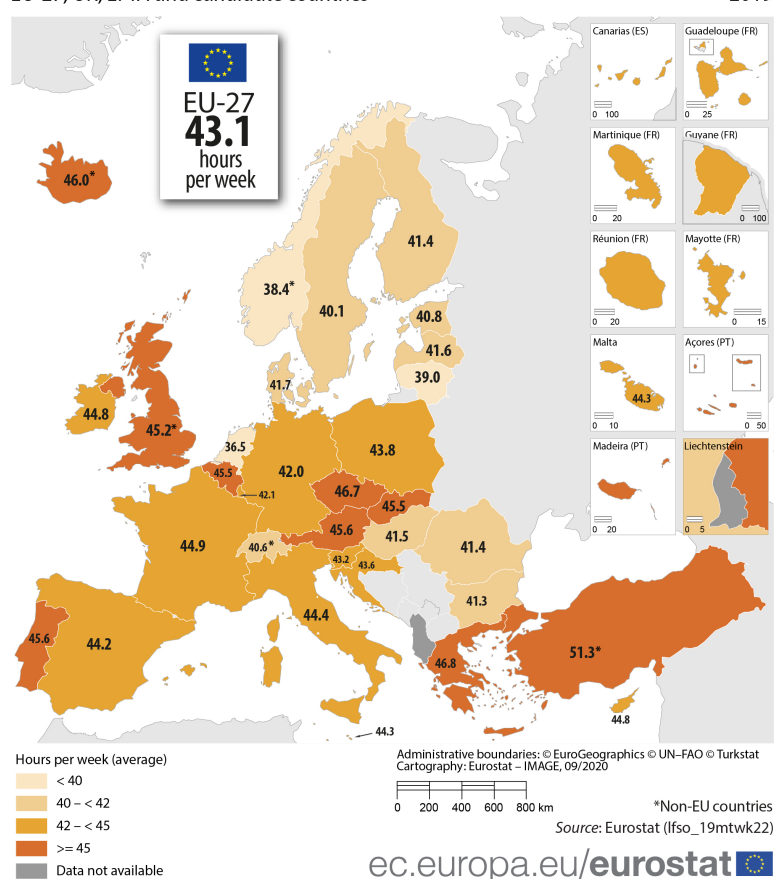
No update foreseen since data are based on an ad-hoc module.

Employed persons always or often working under time pressure

Average number of usual working hours for those being contacted during leisure time by employer or clients with direct action required

EU-27, UK, EFTA and candidate countries

2019



Average number of usual working hours for employed persons always or often working under time pressure and being contacted during leisure time (by employer or clients) with direct action required, 2019 - Source: Eurostat (lfso_19mtwk22)

In 2019, almost 200 million persons out of 370 million, aged 15 years and more, were employed in the EU-27. The degree of autonomy and time pressure of employed persons in the main job widely differ across the EU and are dependent on various background features including country, sex, age, educational attainment level, professional status, economic activity and occupation. Furthermore, the size of firm in which people are employed and the working schedule (i.e. having normal or atypical working hours) can have an impact as well.

This article is the second of a set of articles related to the topic "work organisation and working time arrangements" (ad hoc module of the Labour Force Survey conducted in 2019). It presents results for the European Union as a whole, for each of the 27 [EU Member States](#) as well as the United Kingdom, three [EFTA](#) countries (Iceland, Norway and Switzerland) and Turkey (one of the [candidate countries](#)). The first article related to topic "work organisation and working time arrangements" dealt with the [flexibility at work](#).

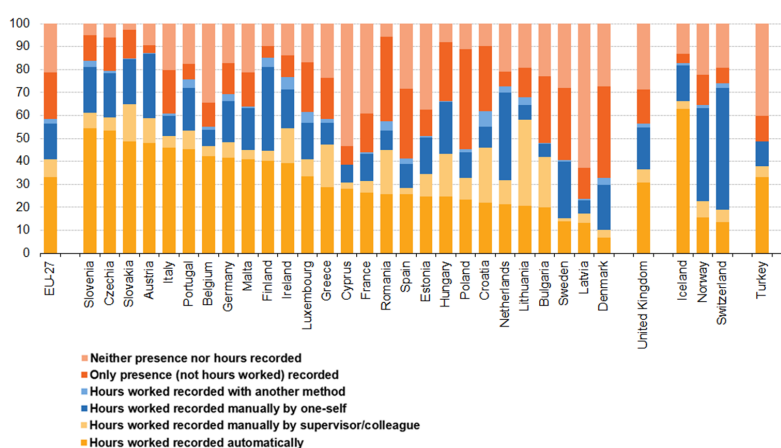
This article provides more insight into the following subjects: (1) the method of reporting presence and working hours of employees, (2) the frequency of working under time pressure for all employed people as well as (3) the degree of job autonomy in the main job.

Two in five employees with a high level of working time monitoring

The method by which working hours are recorded or presence is registered can give an insight into the degree of control and the amount of trust given to the employee. When the working hours are recorded automatically by a recording system or when they are encoded by a supervisor or a colleague, a high level of control can be assumed. By contrast, the possibility for employees to report their working hours by themselves stands for a lower degree of control. When only the presence needs to be registered, the amount of trust and autonomy given to the employee can be considered as even higher.

In 2019, in the EU-27, one in three employees had their working hours recorded automatically, i.e. by an automated system when entering the building, by logging into a computer or device or by starting a machine or vehicle (33.1 %). For 8.0 % of employees, hours were recorded manually by the supervisor or another colleague. In total, 41.1 % of employees had consequently to face a high level of working time monitoring (see Figure 1). By contrast, one in five employees only had to register their presence (20.4 %) and a similar share of employees did not even need to record anything (21.2 %). Between these situations, 15.3 % of employees recorded their working hours themselves (i.e. manually) and 2.0 % had their hours recorded by another method.

Employees by method of recording working hours and presence and country, 2019 (%)



Footnote: Low reliability for "hours recorded with another method" in Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia and Malta.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfso_19mtwk17)

eurostat

Figure 1: Employees by method of recording working hours and presence and country, 2019 (%)
- Source: Eurostat (lfso_19mtwk17)

At country level, the share of employees with their working hours recorded automatically ranged from 54.6 % for Slovenia to 6.8 % for Denmark. Czechia (53.3 %), Slovakia (48.8 %), Austria (48.0 %), Italy (46.0 %) and Portu-

gal (45.5 %) followed Slovenia, with a high share of employees having their working hours recorded automatically.

Concerning the registration method of working hours recorded manually by the supervisor or another colleague, twelve Member States were above the EU average of 8.0 %. These included Poland, Estonia, the Netherlands, Austria, Ireland, Slovakia, Hungary, Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and Lithuania, with values ranging from 9.3 % (Poland) to 37.8 % (Lithuania).

Employees in the Netherlands and Finland appeared to have a high degree of autonomy regarding the registration of their working time with almost two in five recording their hours worked themselves (38.2 % and 36.6 % respectively). In Lithuania (6.4 %), Bulgaria and Latvia (both 6.0 %) the corresponding share was very low.

More than half of the employees in Cyprus (53.4 %) and Latvia (62.9 %) did not have to record their working hours or presence. In comparison, less than one in ten employees in Finland, Croatia, Austria, Hungary, Czechia, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia were in this situation (values ranging from 9.7 % for Finland to 2.5 % for Slovakia).

Relation between working time monitoring and company size

The size of the company can have an impact on the method of registration of presence and hours worked. The analysis of the relation between the company size and the recording method is particularly interesting in the case of a high level of working time monitoring, i.e. when the hours worked are recorded automatically or by a colleague or supervisor.

In 2019, relatively more EU employees from small and medium sized firms reported that their hours worked were recorded by their supervisor or colleague than employees from large sized firms (9.2 % and 9.8 % respectively compared with 6.0 %) (see Figure 2A). Please note that the company size is categorized as follows: (1) small-sized companies refer to firms with up to ten persons in employment, (2) medium-sized companies have more than ten and less than 50 persons being employed, and (3) large-sized companies have 50 or more employed persons.

At country level, values far above the EU average were reported by several Member States. For example, for almost 40 % of Lithuanian employees in medium (39.5 %) and small-sized companies (33.5 %) the hours worked were recorded by a colleague or a supervisor. By contrast, only 2.4 % of Latvian employees from medium-sized firms and 3.6 % from small-sized firms had their working hours recorded by a colleague or supervisor.

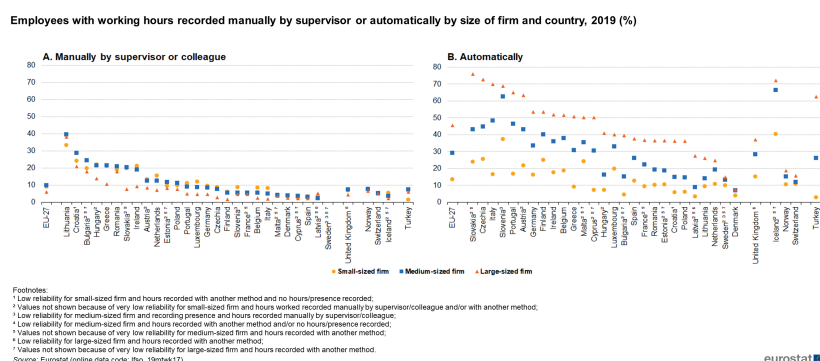


Figure 2: Employees with working hours recorded automatically or manually by supervisor by size of firm and country, 2019 (%) - Source: Eurostat (lfo_19mtwk17)

As regards the automatic recording method, large-sized companies reported higher shares than small or medium-sized companies: almost half of the employees working in a large-sized firm had their working hours recorded automatically (45.6 %) while only 29.2 % of employees in a medium-sized company and 13.7 % in a small-sized company had an automatic registration method for their working hours (see Figure 2B).

Differences across countries nevertheless exist. For almost three in four Slovakian (75.9 %) and Czech (72.8 %)

employees from large-sized firm, the hours worked were recorded automatically. On the other hand, the shares of their counterparts in Sweden only accounted for 15.0 % and in Denmark for only 7.6 % .

Majority of European workers not often working under time pressure

The vast majority of EU employed persons sometimes or never worked under time pressure in 2019 (41.6 % and 22.2 % respectively). By contrast, 11.0 % always worked under time pressure and 25.2 % often did (see Figure 3).

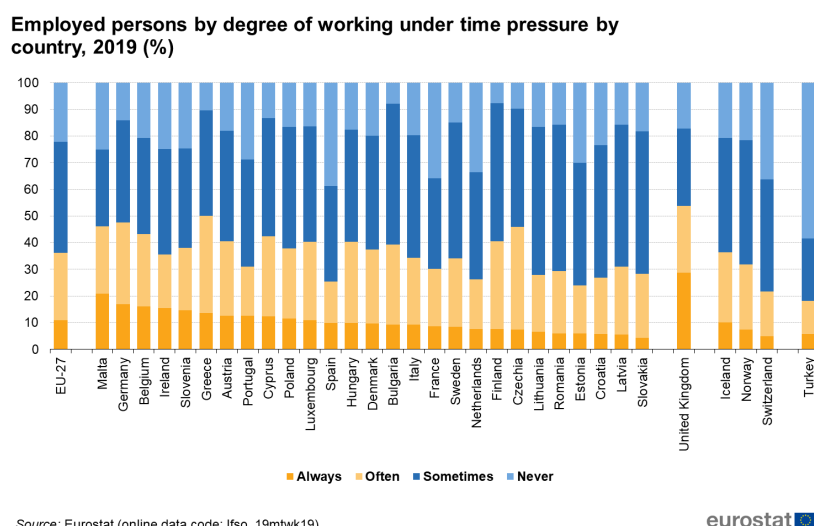


Figure 3: Employed persons by degree of working under time pressure, 2019 (%) - Source: Eurostat (lfso_19mtwk19)

At country level, 55.5 % of employed persons in Lithuania sometimes worked under time pressure. In Malta, this share only accounts for 28.8 %. Malta has the highest percentage of employed persons, however, who always worked under time pressure, with 20.9 %. By contrast, only 4.3 % of workers in Slovakia always worked under time pressure. For the group which has often worked under time pressure, Czechia is at the top with 38.5 % and Spain is at the bottom of the scale with 15.4 %. Spain was nevertheless the country recording the highest rate of employed persons who never experienced time pressure at work, with 38.7 %. In comparison, only 7.7 % of employed persons in Finland never worked under pressure.

Highly educated and self-employed persons with employees more often under time pressure at work

The time pressure of workers does not really change with gender: in 2019, 11.1 % (always) and 25.7 % (often) of men always or often experienced stress at work while the corresponding percentages for women were 10.8 % (always) and 24.6 % (often) (see Figure 4). The middle-aged group (aged 35-49) registered the highest time pressure at work: 11.7 % (often) and 26.6 % (always) of them declared always or often working under time pressure. The corresponding shares for the young people amounted to 10.1 % (always) and 24.2 % (often) and for the senior workers to 10.9 % (always) and 24.3 % (often).

The differences in the frequency of working under time pressure by educational attainment level and professional status were more pronounced. The share of employed people with a high educational attainment level who mentioned always (11.8 %) or often (28.8 %) working under time pressure was higher than for their counterparts having a low (always 8.8 % and often 18.0 %) or medium educational attainment level (always 11.2 % and often 25.0 %). Also, 18.1 % (always) and 33.6 % (often) of self-employed persons with employees always or often worked under time pressure in 2019. By contrast, only 9.0 % (always) and 22.7 % (often) of their counterparts without employees, and 10.9 % (always) and 25.2 % (often) of employees always or often worked under pressure.

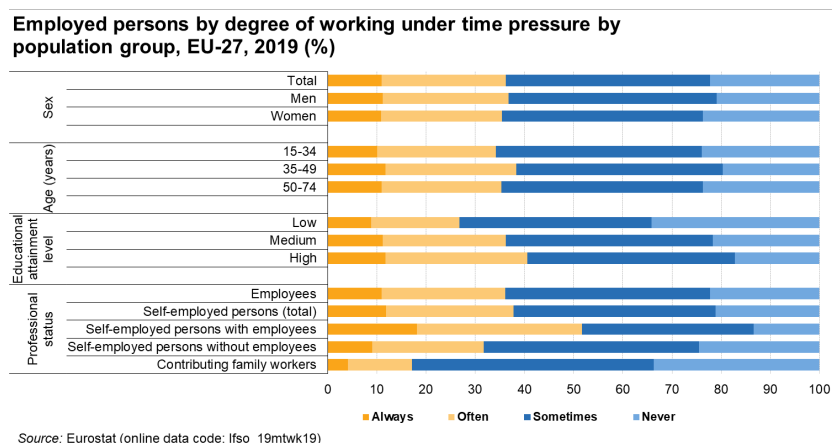
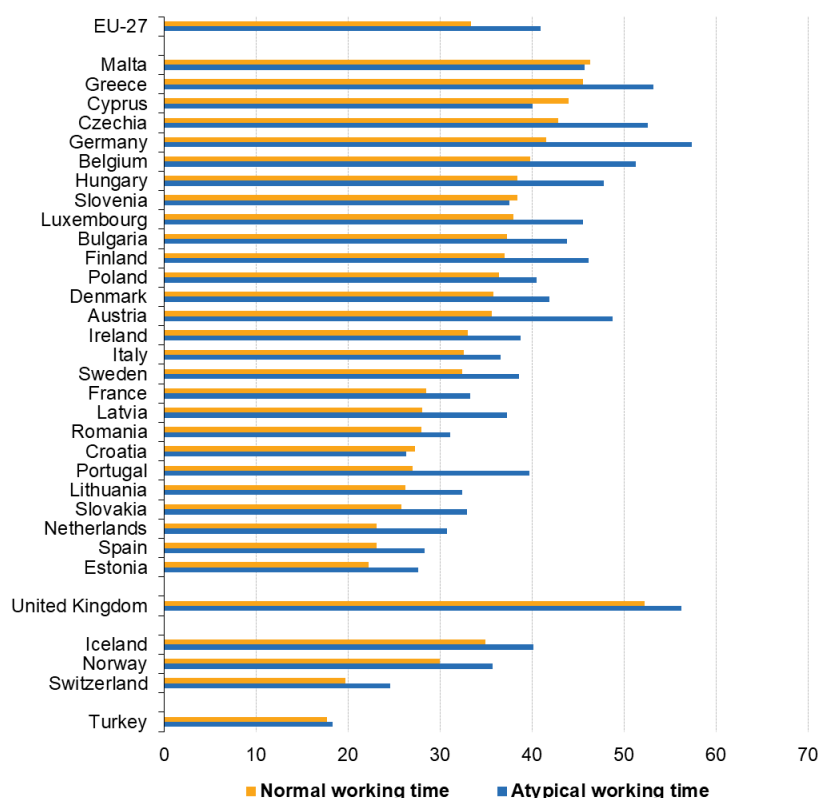


Figure 4: Employed persons by degree of working under time pressure by population group, EU-27, 2019 (%) - Source: Eurostat (lfso_19mtwk19)

Workers having atypical working times mostly under time pressure

Of the employed people in the EU aged 15-74, almost 120 million had a normal working schedule in 2019. Hence, more than 70 million workers had atypical working hours, i.e. they worked in shifts, during the evening or night or during the weekend. Two in five employed persons with an atypical working schedule declared always or often working under time pressure (40.9 %). In comparison, only 33.3 % of those with a normal working schedule declared the same (see Figure 5).

Employed persons working always or often under time pressure by working time and country, 2019 (%)



Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfso_19mtwk20)

eurostat

Figure 5: Employed persons working always or often under time pressure by working time and country, 2019 (%) - Source: Eurostat (lfso_19mtwk20)

Germany had the highest share of people with atypical working time working always or often under time pressure (57.3 %), followed by Greece (53.2 %) and Czechia (52.6 %). By contrast, Croatia (26.4 %) and Spain (28.3 %) registered the lowest share of people always or often experiencing time pressure at work among those with atypical working time.

As regards those with normal working hours, Malta ranked highest with 46.3 % of workers being often or always under time pressure, followed by Greece with 45.6 %. On the opposite side, Estonia (22.3 %), Spain and the Netherlands (both 23.1 %) ranked lowest.

Persons employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing activities worked the least under pressure

More than three in four workers in agriculture, forestry and fishing activities never or sometimes worked under time pressure in 2019: 29.2 % (never) and 49.3 % (sometimes) respectively. The situation was similar among employed persons involved in arts, entertainment and recreation activities. Persons employed in financial and insurance activities, mostly experienced time pressure, with 12.8 % working always working under time pressure, and 31.4 % working often under time pressure (see Figure 6).

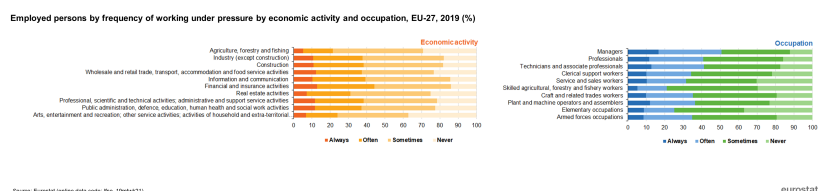


Figure 6: Employed persons by frequency of working under pressure by economic activity and occupation, EU-27, 2019 (%) - Source: Eurostat (lfsa_19mtwk21)

Regarding the different types of occupation, managers were at the top of the hierarchy for those who always (16.7 %) or often (34.0 %) worked under time pressure. Technicians/associate professionals and professional followed with 12.7 % and 11.6 % (always) and 28.6 % and 29.3 % (often) respectively. Skilled agricultural, forestry and fishery workers and persons employed in elementary occupations experienced the least pressure.

Average working time for those working under time pressure and being contacted during leisure time was 43.1 hours per week

In 2019, in the EU-27, employed persons usually worked 37.2 hours per week. Was this also the case for employed people who always or often work under time pressure and for those who are contacted during their leisure time by their employer, organisation or clients with direct action required (i.e. work-related action required before the next working day)?

At EU level, the average working time for those who declared to always or often work under time pressure and to have been contacted by their employer or clients several times during their leisure time amounted to 43.1 hours per week. Nevertheless, differences across countries could be observed. The first group of countries consisted of Lithuania, the Netherlands and Norway with a usual working week of less than 40 hours for those being in the situation described above. Sweden, Estonia, Bulgaria, Finland, Romania, Hungary Latvia, Denmark and Switzerland compiled the second group, with usual hours of work ranging from 40.1 hours to 41.7 hours. Germany, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Croatia, Poland, Spain, Malta, Italy, Cyprus, Ireland and France had working hours from 42.0 to 44.9 hours. The fourth group of countries, including Slovakia, Belgium, Portugal, Austria, Czechia, Greece, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Turkey, had a usual working week for those declaring to always or often work under time pressure and being contacted by their employer or clients several times during their leisure time above 45 hours (see Map 1).

High degree of job autonomy as regards content and order of tasks

People having some or a large influence on content and order of tasks in the main job can be assumed to have a high degree of autonomy at work. By contrast, workers having little or no impact on content and order of tasks are presumed to have a low degree of job autonomy. Also, it can be supposed that the higher the job autonomy of workers, the higher their job quality and satisfaction (see Figure 7).

All in all, more than half of workers in the Member States experienced a high job autonomy in 2019 with 49.6 % having some or large influence on content and order of tasks. At country level, Portugal had the highest share of employed persons having a high job autonomy (75.5 %), followed by Luxembourg (73.3 %). Cyprus (19.8 %) and Slovakia (23.2 %) had the lowest shares.

Employed persons by job autonomy and country, 2019 (%)

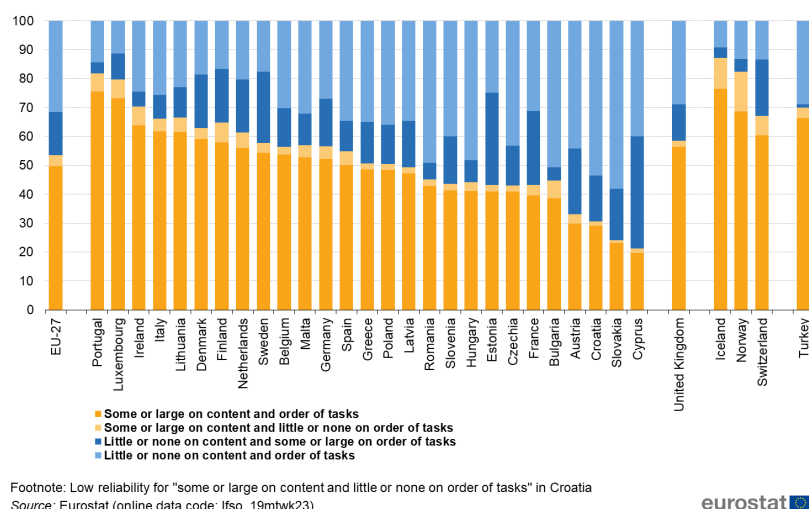


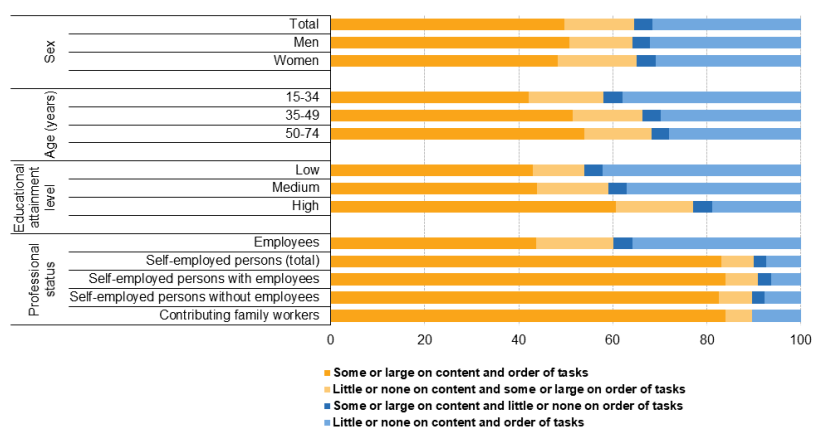
Figure 7: Employed persons by job autonomy and country, 2019 (%) - Source: Eurostat (lfso_19mtwk23)

By contrast, at EU-level, almost one in three workers had little or no influence on content and order of tasks (31.5 %) and consequently seem to have a low degree of job autonomy in the main job. Slovakia reported the highest share of people with little or no influence on content and order of tasks (58.1 %), followed by Croatia (53.6 %). On the other hand, Luxembourg (11.3 %) and Portugal (14.5 %) had the lowest shares of people with a low degree of job autonomy.

Self-employed have the highest degree of autonomy in the main job

Age, educational attainment level and professional status mostly affect the degree of job autonomy. The impact of age on job autonomy is reflected by the differences between the youngest and oldest age groups. In 2019, more than half of senior employed persons (aged 50-74) had some or large influence on content and order of tasks in the main job (53.9 %). In comparison, only 42.1 % of those aged 15-34 were in this situation. On the other hand, the higher the educational attainment level of an employed person, the larger the degree of job autonomy. Workers who attained a high level of education registered 60.7 % of people with some or large influence on content and order of tasks, against 42.9 % for workers who attained a low level of education (see Figure 8).

Employed persons by job autonomy and population groups, EU-27, 2019 (%)



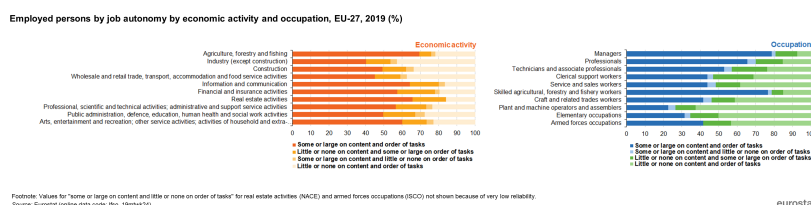
Footnote: Low reliability for "some or large on content and little or none on order of tasks" in Croatia
Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfso_19mtwk23)

Figure 8: Employed persons by job autonomy and population groups, EU-27, 2019 (%) - Source: Eurostat (lfso_19mtwk23)

The impact related to professional status is more impressive. While 43.7 % of employees had some or a large influence on content and order of tasks, this share was almost doubled for those being self-employed, with 83.0 %. More precisely, 84.0 % of self-employed with employees had a high job autonomy in comparison to 82.6 % of their counterparts without employees.

Workers involved in industrial activities with the least job autonomy

In 2019, people employed in industrial activities had the lowest degree of job autonomy: 42.8 % had little or no impact on content and order of tasks. By contrast, people working in agriculture, forestry and fishing had the highest degree of job autonomy with 69.5 % having some or a large influence on content and order of tasks (see Figure 9).



Footnote: Values for "some or large on content and little or none on order of tasks" for real estate activities (NACE) and armed forces occupations (ISCO) not shown because of very low reliability.
Source: Eurostat (online data code: lfso_19fxwt12)

eurostat

Figure 9: Employed persons by job autonomy by economic activity and occupation, EU-27, 2019 (%) - Source: Eurostat (lfso_19fxwt12)

Related to occupation, plant and machine operators and assemblers were the least autonomous workers, with 62.5 % of them having little or no influence on content and tasks. Managers were the most autonomous, with 78.6 % of them having large or some influence on content and tasks.

Source data for tables and graphs

- Figures and tables on Job autonomy and pressure at work 2019

Data sources

Source: The European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) is the largest European household sample survey providing quarterly and annual results on labour participation of people aged 15 and over as well as on

persons outside the labour force. It covers residents in private households. Conscripts in military or community service are not included in the results. The EU-LFS is based on the same target populations and uses the same definitions in all countries, which means that the results are comparable between the countries. The EU-LFS is an important source of information about the situation and trends in the national and EU labour markets. Each quarter around 1.8 million interviews are conducted throughout the participating countries to obtain statistical information for some 100 variables. Due to the diversity of information and the large sample size, the EU-LFS is also an important source for other European statistics like Education statistics or Regional statistics.

Reference period and coverage: Results are obtained during the whole year (annually or quarterly). More detailed information can be found in the assessment report.

Target population: the target population of this ad hoc module is persons in employment aged 15 years and older.

European aggregates: EU and EU-27 refer to the totality of the EU of 27 Member States. If data are unavailable for a country, the calculation of the corresponding aggregates takes into account the data for the same country for the most recent period available. Such cases are indicated.

Definition of employment: The concepts and definitions used in the survey follow the guidelines of the International Labour Organisation. Employment covers persons aged 15 years and over (16 and over in Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom, 15-74 years in Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Finland, Sweden and Norway, and 16-74 years in Iceland), living in private households, who during the reference week performed work, even for just one hour, for pay, profit or family gain, or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent, for example because of illness, holidays, industrial dispute or education and training.

Educational attainment level: The level of education refers to the educational attainment level, i.e. the highest level of education successfully completed. Low level of education refers to ISCED levels 0-2 (less than primary, primary and lower secondary education), medium level refers to ISCED levels 3 and 4 (upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education) and high level of education refers to ISCED levels 5-8 (tertiary education).

Context

The EU has a longstanding commitment to support the principles on secure and adaptable employment, work-life balance and well adapted work environment. This is evidenced by the European employment strategy, the employment guidelines and the European Pillar of Social Rights which express the need for greater adaptability of both enterprises and workers in Europe. Those EU initiatives highlight the need to collect data on the application of new practices in work organisation and working time arrangements and the experiences of workers with those practices and arrangements at European level. In order to monitor the progress in this area, the implementation of the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) 2019 module on work organisation and working time arrangements is of high importance.

In the context of investigating the balance between work and family life of the European population, employment statistics are of high importance. Employment statistics are at the heart of many EU policies. The [European employment strategy](#) (EES) was launched at the Luxembourg jobs summit in November 1997 and was revamped in 2005 to align the EU's employment strategy more closely to a set of revised Lisbon objectives, and in July 2008, employment policy guidelines for the period 2008–2010 were updated. In March 2010, the European Commission launched the [Europe 2020 strategy](#) for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth; this was formally adopted by the European Council in June 2010. The European Council agreed on five headline targets, the first being to raise the employment rate for women and men aged 20 to 64 years old to 75 % by 2020. EU Member States may set their own national targets in the light of these headline targets and draw up national reform programmes that include the actions they aim to undertake in order to implement the strategy.

The implementation of the strategy might be achieved, at least in part, through the promotion of flexible working conditions — for example, part-time work or work from home — which are thought to stimulate labour participation. Among others, initiatives that may encourage more people to enter the labour market include improvements in the availability of childcare facilities, providing more opportunities for lifelong learning, or facilitating job mobility. Central to this theme is the issue of 'flexicurity': policies that simultaneously address the

flexibility of labour markets, work organisation and labour relations, while taking into account the reconciliation of work and private life, employment security and social protection. In line with the Europe 2020 strategy, the EES encourages measures to help meet three headline targets by 2020, namely, for:

- 75 % of people aged 20 to 64 to be in work;
- rates of early school leaving to be reduced below 10 %, and for at least 40 % of 30 to 34-year-olds to have completed tertiary education;
- at least 20 million fewer people to be in or at-risk-of-poverty and social exclusion.

Employment and social policies are also the main fields of interest of the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#), which is about delivering new and more effective rights for citizens. It has three main categories: (1) Equal opportunities and access to the labour market; (2) Fair working conditions; (3) Social protection and inclusion.

In particular, today's more flexible working arrangements provide new job opportunities especially for the young but can potentially give rise to new precariousness and inequalities.

Other articles

- [All articles on the labour market](#)
- [EU labour force survey](#)

Publications

- [European Union Labour force survey - selection of electronic articles \(Statistics Explained\)](#)

Database

- [Employment and unemployment \(LFS\)](#)

Dedicated section

- [Labour market including Labour force Survey \(LFS\)](#)

Methodology

- [Statistical working papers / Manuals and guidelines](#)