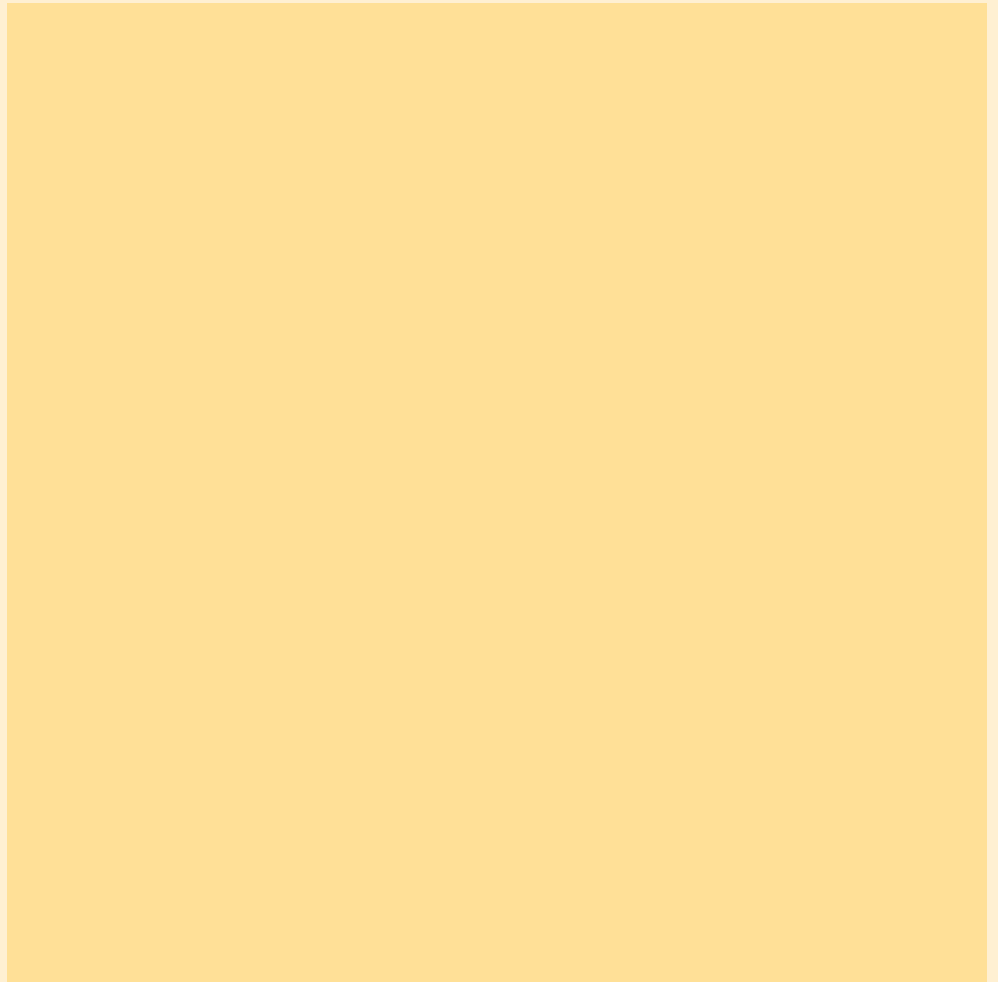




European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

QUALITY OF LIFE IN EUROPE

Working and living in an enlarged Europe



QUALITY OF LIFE IN EUROPE

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The following reports constitute part of the Foundation's series on quality of life in Europe.

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Foundation project: Quality of life in central and east European countries

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European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

QUALITY OF LIFE IN EUROPE

Working and living in an enlarged Europe

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Foreword

The interrelationship between the quality of economic and social development has become an important aspect of policy debates at European level in recent times. The European Commission and Council of Ministers have increasingly focused on this issue and the social partners have indicated growing awareness of, and interest in, policies promoting corporate social responsibility and initiatives to improve employee work–life balance. By concentrating efforts in these areas, it is hoped to improve both the quality of the work environment as well as aspects of the individual's private life.

This report on *Working and living in an enlarged Europe* represents an initial attempt to analyse the relationship between quality of work and quality of life, on the basis of quantitative comparative data. The results highlight the relationship between economic development and the importance of better quality working conditions for subjective well-being.

The analysis is based on data from the European Commission's Eurobarometer survey carried out in the acceding countries (now the new Member States) and candidate countries in spring 2002, and standard EU15 Eurobarometers. This report is one in a series of reports on quality of life in an enlarging Europe.

Willy Buschak
Acting Director

Country codes used in figures and tables

Austria	AT
Belgium	BE
Bulgaria	BG
Cyprus	CY
Czech Republic	CZ
Denmark	DK
Estonia	EE
Finland	FI
France	FR
Germany	DE
Greece	EL
Hungary	HU
Ireland	IE
Italy	IT
Latvia	LV
Lithuania	LT
Luxembourg	LU
Malta	MT
Netherlands	NL
Poland	PL
Portugal	PT
Romania	RO
Slovakia	SK
Slovenia	SI
Spain	ES
Sweden	SE
Turkey	TR
United Kingdom	UK
EU15	15 Member States of the European Union (pre-May 2004)
EU25	25 Member States of the European Union (post-May 2004)
NMS	10 new Member States that joined the EU in May 2004: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia
CC3	three candidate countries: Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey

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Introduction

The individual welfare of citizens is determined by conditions and resources in their economic and private sphere. The balance between both domains is defined in a more or less formal 'social contract', which forms the basis of a particular welfare state regime. Employees spend at least one third of their time at work and devote, in many instances, more time to work than to leisure, friends and family combined. Therefore, the distribution of time between work and private life, and the organisation of its interrelationship, is of pivotal importance for the overall quality of life of citizens in Europe.

As part of its overall monitoring of quality of life, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions takes a particular interest in the analysis of the quality of working conditions and in the interrelationship with various aspects of quality of life¹. This is an issue that has been neglected in the past, not only by the Foundation, but also by other international organisations that provide empirically based policy advice, such as the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The only exception here is the analysis and development of policies relating to the issue of work–life balance and, in particular, of family friendly work practices. One reason for this knowledge gap is the lack of available comparative data, as most survey data cover either working or living conditions separately, but do not include both aspects within one survey sample.

The prime objective of this report is, not to describe and analyse working conditions in the EU but, to explore the dynamic relations and interdependencies between various aspects of quality of living and working conditions in an enlarged EU, as perceived by its citizens. Since 1990, the Foundation has systematically monitored and analysed the quality of working conditions, using three comprehensive, EU-wide working conditions surveys². A fourth working conditions survey will be conducted in summer 2005 and initial results will be available at the beginning of 2006.

EU policy context

From a political perspective, this report is particularly timely as the interrelationship between the quality of economic and social development has become an important focus in the policies of the European Commission and the Council of Ministers. European social partners have also increased their awareness and policy activity in this regard. For example, both sides of industry have expressed interest in policies promoting corporate social responsibility (CSR) and in initiatives aimed at improving the work–life balance of employees. Through such initiatives, it is hoped that the quality of companies' internal work environment and various aspects of the quality of private life – such as relationships between family and friends, lifelong learning and social participation in the community – can be improved.

Overall, the notion of 'quality' has gained significant importance in European policy discourse, particularly since the European Council agreed the Lisbon Strategy in 2000. Both the Lisbon Strategy and the medium-term Social Policy Agenda of the European Commission (2000–2005) view the quality issue as being at the heart of the European social model. This issue plays a central

¹ Also a mandate of the Foundation.

² As part of the Third European Working Conditions Survey, the Foundation provided an analysis of working conditions in the acceding and candidate countries and compared them with working conditions in the former EU15 (Foundation, 2003).

role in a comprehensive strategy, designed to promote high levels and standards of employment in a competitive and inclusive knowledge economy, thus providing the basis for adequate quality of life standards for European citizens. Through this approach, the EU extends the notion of quality from the business world to the whole of society, and follows the trend of several Member States. This approach is reflected in the new proposal of the European Commission in the Social Policy Agenda 2006–2010 (2005, p. 2).

The underlying policy approach of the Lisbon Strategy is based on the concept of a mutually positive interaction ('positive feedback process') between the economic sphere (commodity, services and labour markets) and the private sphere (its citizens). Improved quality of life is not only an outcome of good economic performance and policies, but also a factor of and basis for successful medium- and long-term economic performance. Within the European social model, important pre-conditions for a modern and competitive knowledge economy include³: social inclusion, low levels of poverty, favourable health conditions, effective and sustainable social protection systems, high standards of education, sufficient housing conditions, highly developed social capital and decreasing levels of inequalities in society.

According to the logic of the European social model, social policies perform social as well as economic functions, with employment, time and income providing the essential link between the economic and private spheres. Social policy expenditure is seen, not so much as a cost, but rather as a social investment, particularly in health and education, which has a direct impact on employment and competitiveness. Such investments support employability and adaptability, as well as enabling an effective combination of flexibility and security in the workplace. They also contribute to rising productivity and overall improved standards of living.

For a successful transition into the knowledge economy, the promotion of high quality work and working conditions is regarded as a key component within the European Employment Strategy (EES). These objectives are not only related to the improvement of quantitative labour market performance through reduced unemployment, but also to improvements across several dimensions of quality of work and working conditions. The European Commission (2003, p. 6) assumes a positive interaction between high quality work and increased labour market participation. Since the end of the 1990s, various European councils have developed concrete policies in this area, requesting, for example: a good work environment for all workers, equal opportunities and gender equality, a flexible work organisation leading to a greater balance between flexibility and security, an effective work–life balance, improved lifelong learning, improved health and safety at work, increased employee involvement, and more diversity at work.

This broad policy agenda around quality of work demands a multi-dimensional and pragmatic approach. Just as this approach needs to support the process of an 'open method of coordination on employment', it should also facilitate an effective exchange of experiences through the systematic monitoring of quality of work in Member States. In order to implement such a monitoring instrument, the European Council agreed a set of indicators at the so-called 'Laeken

³ There are some concerns among trade unions and NGOs that this link may be weakened by the new orientation of the Lisbon Agenda, presented by the new Commission to the Spring Council in 2005.

summit' in 2001. The Laeken summit concluded that an indicator should fulfil important requirements which have repercussions for the quality of work itself. These indicators should: measure outcomes, be based on consensus about which direction they should take in order to enhance social progress, reflect the level and extent of social outcomes of interest, be of high policy relevance in the context of the European policy debate, and be suitable for cross-country comparisons⁴.

Within this context, the European Commission (2001, pp. 7–8) developed its own definition of quality of work and working conditions.

Defining quality of work and working conditions

In general, a distinction can be made between a political and scientific approach in defining quality of work.

European Commission

The approach of the European Commission is mainly politically driven. As a first step, the European Commission uses a broad definition, based on a multi-dimensional concept of quality of work. It distinguishes between five specific dimensions: objective characteristics related to the wider work environment; objective characteristics related to the specific work environment; characteristics that workers bring to the job; the match between job requirements and traits/characteristics of workers; and subjective evaluation of quality of work by the employee (job satisfaction).

In the European Commission's understanding, the wider work environment includes aspects such as working conditions, training, career prospects and health insurance, whereas specific characteristics encompass pay, hours of work, skill requirements and job tasks.

According to the Commission (2001, p. 7), EU policies already take into account certain elements of quality of work. However, to successfully implement the Lisbon Strategy, a more coherent approach in implementing the various policies is needed, as is greater consensus between the Member States and social partners, in relation to the main elements of quality of work.

As a second step, the Commission identifies two main elements of quality of work: a) job characteristics; and b) the wider labour market context. Job characteristics represent dimensions that were previously subsumed by the wider and specific work environment. The wider labour market context includes the following aspects, which are either explicitly or implicitly related to specific social policy areas of the EU: gender equality, health and safety, flexibility and security, access to jobs, work–life balance, social dialogue and worker involvement, diversity and non-discrimination.

⁴ Many researchers in the field of working conditions and quality of work question whether a country by country comparison provides the most useful insight into different structural patterns of working conditions in Europe. Most researchers would regard sectoral and occupational differences as more important.

The European Commission's conceptualisation resulted in seven core indicators and 24 context indicators for quality of work in Europe. The 31 indicators, in total, cover 10 domains⁵, namely:

- intrinsic job quality;
- skills, lifelong learning and career development;
- gender equality;
- health and safety at work;
- flexibility and security;
- inclusion and access to the labour market;
- work organisation and work-life balance;
- social dialogue and worker involvement;
- diversity and non-discrimination;
- overall work performance.

Quality of work is systematically monitored using the Commission's 31 indicators. Annual trend reports are presented and employment guidelines for the implementation of the national action plans (NAPs) on employment are updated accordingly.

In order to distinguish between 'good' and 'bad' jobs in Europe, the European Commission uses three specific dimensions of job quality (2001a, p. 74)⁶, which refer to three of the 10 domains. They are: job security (work contract and type of contract), access to training and career development (in-company training), and hourly wages (a low wage is seen as below 75% of country specific hourly wage). Based on this approach, the Commission constructs four categories of jobs: dead-end jobs, low-pay/low-productivity jobs, jobs of reasonable quality and high quality jobs.

Using this typology, the Commission identified, for 1996, a proportion of 8% dead-end jobs, 17% low-wage jobs, 37% reasonable jobs and 38% high quality jobs (2001a, pp. 74–75).

In 2003, the Commission (2003a, pp. 126–127) modified its approach by creating a dichotomy between 'relatively high quality jobs' (combining the two highest quality dimensions) and 'low quality employment' (combining the two lowest quality dimensions). In factual terms, the Commission concludes that, between 1996 and 2000, around one quarter of employees in Europe consistently experienced a relatively low quality of work.

European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS)

The concept of quality of work, which supports the Foundation's European Working Conditions Survey (Foundation, 2002, p. 6), is similar to the European Commission's definition. The selection of relevant aspects and domains of the EWCS is based on the European political agenda and on its definition of 10 core areas in relation to quality of work.

⁵ This means that there are three domains which have no agreed key indicator, an indication of the political difficulties of the Council to reach agreement on indicators.

⁶ The European Commission has not explained, however, why it has chosen these three dimensions and why it has used specific indicators for their operationalisation.

Unlike the European Commission, however, the Foundation divides the quality of work concept into four key areas (Foundation, 2001, p. 5):

- job security⁷;
- health and well-being⁸;
- competence development⁹;
- combining working and non-working life¹⁰.

In comparing the European Commission's definition of quality of work with that of the Foundation, it is evident that the former definition is more political in its basis, whereas the latter one is more systematic from a conceptual perspective.

The Foundation recommends the measuring of indicators on three levels: a) structural conditions; b) situation; and c) result. In addition, the Foundation suggests developing complex indicators in relation to areas including health conditions, safety at work, and time quality. Thus, in comparison with the European Commission, the Foundation maintains a different methodological approach in its construction of indicators.

According to the Foundation, fundamental differences in social positioning and in its perception by employees and employers have to be taken into account, when monitoring quality of work. The European Commission, however, uses indicators which are based on an unambiguous consensus between governments about their interpretation, and, in particular, on a joint understanding of what represents social progress. The European Commission and Foundation differ also in their approach regarding empirical information used to measure the indicators. Whereas the European Commission uses mainly statistical information (Eurostat and, in exceptional cases, data from the ECHP), the Foundation refers more to its own survey data¹¹.

Despite these differences, however, both approaches are complementary and contribute to the political process at European Union (EU) level, particularly in support of the 'open method of coordination' and social dialogue process.

International Labour Organisation¹²

Traditionally, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) has never assumed 'that a job is a job, irrespective of its characteristics' (2002, p. 164). According to the ILO, some jobs – for instance, forced labour, child labour, low productivity jobs, informal-sector jobs – will always be deemed unfavourable and contrary to basic social values. Other jobs, however, may be deemed unacceptable in one country but considered worthwhile in other countries. Such jobs will evolve and improve, as a result of economic and social development.

⁷ Job security includes: status, income, social protection and workers' rights/representation.

⁸ Health and well-being includes: occupational accidents, exposure to risks, and work organisation.

⁹ Competence development encompasses: skills and training, career development, job satisfaction, and work organisation.

¹⁰ Work-life balance includes: time patterns, equal opportunities and non-discrimination, and social infrastructures.

¹¹ It would be too far-reaching for this report to go into more detail here.

¹² See annex of information from UNECE seminar, May 2005: Note on quality of work.

Within this general framework, the ILO has initiated a campaign for 'decent work'. In 1999, the promotion of decent work for all persons everywhere and a reduction of its deficits formed the pivotal organisational framework of the ILO, after it introduced and described decent work as: 'opportunities for women and men to obtain decent and productive work in conditions of freedom, equity, security and human dignity' (ILO, 1999). This definition includes the following six dimensions: a) opportunity for work; b) productive work; c) freedom of choice of employment; d) equity in work; e) security at work; and f) dignity at work.

However, in order to determine a country's progress towards achieving decent work, or the extent to which countries differ in terms of existing conditions conducive to decent work, a set of explicitly defined statistical indicators is required. It should be noted that from the very outset, when these indicators were first developed, it was decided that they should allow for both quantitative and qualitative measurement of progress towards achieving decent work goals.

Based on its description of decent work, a core set of 30 'decent work' statistical indicators has been proposed by the ILO¹³. These indicators should not be considered as final and complete, however. While some of the indicators already exist, others need to be developed from existing data sources, such as household level sample surveys. Some experimental work has already been carried out in a number of countries within and outside Europe.

Within the ILO, work is also underway to develop qualitative indicators of employment. Qualitative indicators, while numerical in basis, address issues that are intrinsically more qualitative in nature and that are based on methods such as the coding of legislation, court records and other textual sources, or on other assessments of the effective application of labour law. Among the four fundamental rights at work, for instance, freedom of association and collective bargaining rights seem to particularly lend themselves to qualitative approaches.

Scientific perspective

From a scientific perspective, quality of work is defined using a multi-dimensional approach, which reflects a wider ranging system of dimensions and indicators. Most schemes used by governments, the European Commission, or by organisations like the ILO or the OECD, are in agreement in relation to the importance of a variety of dimensions; as a result, they tend to regard the presentation of scientific reasoning as unnecessary. Nevertheless, it is useful to briefly present the main conceptual foundations of the working conditions concept from a scientific perspective. The various key dimensions of working conditions have become widely accepted, following numerous discourses on specific work related issues, which emphasise the importance of different key dimensions.

Seven discourses, in particular, can be distinguished¹⁴. Most of them represent a range of individual approaches. Each approach refers to various dimensions of working conditions, which are regarded as important for a specific purpose (e.g. to humanise work, to improve work motivation or job satisfaction, to influence attitudes of workers). This report cannot go into greater

¹³ For more details, see Anker et al, 2002.

¹⁴ The overview of the various concepts is based on several inputs, particularly by Kaufmann, 2004.

detail regarding the variety of these approaches. Therefore, the presentation of the various concepts of working conditions remains somewhat schematic.

One particular group of conceptual approaches focuses on the social behaviour of employees. It includes three concepts: 'human relations'¹⁵, the social capital approach, and company culture. This group identifies several indicators of quality of work, which are perceived as being important: social relations at the workplace; informal working groups; social network and quality of social contacts; career structures; and trust in company and in management.

Another group of concepts relates to the work process itself. It covers four concepts: critical assessment of 'Taylorism'; trends in automation and new information technology; the so-called 'labour process debate'; and the various socio-technical approaches of work design and humanisation of work. The following dimensions are important within this group of concepts: high degree of division of labour and work monotonies; physical and psychological fatigue; work intensity; human-machine relationship; increasing importance of psychological working conditions; importance of informal working groups; falling behind in skills, upgrading skills and the polarisation of skills; increased importance of the human factor and competence development; demands for job rotation; job enlargement and enrichment; and the quest for greater autonomy and direct participation.

A third group of concepts highlights the different interests of social partners. Two approaches, in particular, can be distinguished: research dealing with the social, political and societal attitudes of workers; and concepts dealing with reasons for industrial conflict. The following indicators of quality of work are used: wage structure and level; degree of exploitation; demanding physical working conditions; and unfavourable psychological working conditions.

A fourth group deals with individual employee characteristics. This group includes: approaches describing and explaining job satisfaction; work motivation¹⁶; work values; and work as an instrumental activity. Many indicators for quality of work are used here: work content and organisation; wage level; task and scheduling autonomy; skill variety (variability of performed tasks); task identity and significance; competence development; degree of time autonomy; importance of work for the individual; possibilities for social interaction at work; intrinsic (quality of work content, identification with work and company) and extrinsic (wage, holidays, status) conditions; non-secular outcomes ('protestant ethic' and other religious outcomes); manifest functions (income) and latent functions (time structure, social contacts, social status, social identity).

A fifth group of concepts relates to a company's relationship with the labour market. Two important approaches can be distinguished here: the first analyses the conditions for labour supply and the second focuses on the segmentation of the labour market. This group identifies the following indicators: work-life balance; career structure; core and peripheral workforce; competencies/skills; and job security.

¹⁵ See 'Hawthorne experiments' in the US, in the 1930s.

¹⁶ See, for example, Ulich, 2004, p. 8.

A sixth group highlights the health and safety dimension of work and includes the following indicators: physical and psychological working conditions; prevention; design of workplaces; work intensity; and participation of employees.

Finally, there are a number of approaches that explore the importance of participation in the workplace (representative and direct). These approaches use indicators related to: work organisation (e.g. group work), and delegation and consultation.

This broad overview highlights the fact that the dimensions chosen by the European Commission, the ILO and the Foundation are very much in line with scientific discourse, although not explicitly so. It also confirms that most of the 'standard' dimensions do not simply originate from one single theoretical framework, but are used in a variety of conceptual frameworks, for different purposes.

Modified approach of the Foundation

The concept of quality of working conditions, used in this study, is in line with mainstream scientific discourse and with previous conceptualisations of quality of work by the Foundation. Unlike the European Commission's approach, the Foundation concentrates on job characteristics of the work environment and not on the wider labour market context. Due to limited space on the questionnaire, its approach is restricted to seven key dimensions. The report tries to define quality of working conditions, without looking at it from a specific employee or employer perspective. It reflects the underlying interest of social partners in a company culture founded on partnership. Such an approach stresses five particular motives that are common to management, employee representatives and employees, with regard to quality of working conditions, namely:

- responsibility for well-being of employees, based on humanitarian grounds;
- high availability of labour at a reasonable cost;
- competitiveness through flexibility, innovation and quality;
- development of competencies and skills, to support employability of the employee, adaptability of the company, and long-term prospects of the social security system in relation to financial sustainability.

On this basis, the seven key domains of working conditions are: physically demanding working conditions; psychologically demanding working conditions; autonomy; unemployment experience and job security; working hours and overtime; career opportunities; and work intensity.

Based on the Foundation's reasoning in its concept paper on the working conditions survey, it was decided not to use individual indicators, but instead, to construct more complex indices. In total, seven indices were constructed; these will be explained in greater detail in each chapter.

Relationship between quality of working and living conditions

As far as EU social policy is concerned, the interrelationship between the quality of working and living conditions relates to the overall debate on the links between employment and social inclusion. Being in paid employment or being self-employed is seen as a key aspect of social inclusion, which enables the individual to participate in all aspects of life.

Some authors, e.g. Gallie (2002, p. 95ff), doubt the existence of such a linear relationship. For them, the extent to which employment offers opportunities for real social participation depends crucially on the quality of jobs. Accordingly, low quality working conditions are perceived as a risk factor for sustainable social inclusion. High job insecurity combined with a high unemployment risk is related to certain working conditions. The same is true for reduced levels of employability (e.g. through low initial training and restricted access to lifelong learning) and reduced chances in the labour market.

Income risks leading, in extreme cases, to relative income poverty or to absolute material deprivation are associated with specific working conditions. An important facet of such a policy discourse is the increasing number of people who are in the 'working poor' category in the EU.

Low levels of work autonomy and reduced responsibilities are not only detrimental to people's capacity for self-development through work; they also affect the individual's capacity to develop general social skills and can lead, in the long run, to reduced social capital or to a restricted form of social participation (Gallie, 2002, p. 110). In policy terms, such an analysis would favour a social policy that would complement the traditional reactive labour market policy (e.g. on income support), through more active and preventive policies, including initiatives to humanise the organisation of work and to improve employees' competencies and skills. A particular focus would be on labour market risk groups, such as low-skilled workers.

In relation to the conceptual debate, this can be defined in two parts. The first part looks at the general relationship between the two overarching life domains of working and living conditions. The second part discusses, more specifically, the relationship between working conditions and two particular aspects of living conditions: perceived quality of social relations and general life satisfaction.

Overall, the relationship between the two overarching life domains can be structured in four ways:

- influence of work and working conditions on living conditions (extension thesis 1);
- influence of living conditions on work and working conditions (extension thesis 2);
- absence of or insignificant interrelationship between both domains (separation thesis);
- dynamic interaction over time and space (interaction thesis).

Extension thesis 1

This approach has strong foundations in Marxist thinking and in theoretical thinking that stresses the importance of paid work, for the majority of individuals, in a post-industrial society. It not only highlights the material importance of paid work, but also the immaterial benefits of work for social integration (family, friends and society), and for psychological well-being.

Socio-psychological research provides ample evidence that employment is a source of personal stability and development. A good example is the groundbreaking work by Johada and Lazarsfeld on 'the unemployed from Marienthal' from the mid 1930s. It shows that employment in market-based societies not only provides income, but is also a source of social and psychological stability. Specifically, work establishes a clear time structure for the day, week and year, a sense of participation in society, a strong sense of identity, and a stable pattern of regular activities.

Extension thesis 1 is also supported by research evidence, which demonstrates that people who showed high levels of self-initiative in their job, also showed higher competencies in dealing with similar situations out of work (Gallie, 2002, p. 99).

Extension thesis 2

This approach is based on concepts that highlight the increasing importance of leisure, consumerism and adventure in wealthy societies. Accordingly, the role of work and working conditions is to satisfy demands stemming from the individual's private life. Concepts of post-industrial society and accompanying social change provide the basic premise. They point to the importance of standards of quality of life (self-fulfilment, participation, autonomy, fun, respect), which have been developed in private life and which would be reflected in the individual's work expectations. Consequently, individuals would look for professions, jobs and employers that enable them to fulfil those ambitions¹⁷.

Separation thesis

Logically, this approach can only cover a minority of people in a capitalistic society, who are independent of market income, either through social transfers or because of sufficient assets. Use of time and provision of income are important links between both working and living domains, which can only be disregarded over a longer time by a small minority of people in society.

Interaction thesis

Concepts relating to work–life balance stress the importance of a dynamic interaction over time and space. Unfavourable working conditions, such as high stress and strenuous physical working conditions, are seen as having an immediate effect on health conditions, family, social relations and overall life satisfaction. Conversely, disadvantageous conditions in the individual's family and private life are identified as important factors in a reduced labour supply and decreasing job satisfaction. In addition, specific family conditions (e.g. having young children and reduced access to childcare services) trigger the demand for specific working conditions (e.g. flexible working time arrangements).

The European Commission (2003, p. 7) highlights the interrelationship between poverty and social inclusion. The labour market status and characteristics of the previous job have a strong influence on social inclusion. Conversely, high degrees of social exclusion and poverty have a direct influence on the quality of jobs available to vulnerable groups.

Time may also be a significant factor. On the one hand, 'bad' entry jobs may turn into 'good' jobs within a work biography, with positive consequences for the individual's quality of life. On the other hand, deprived conditions from a young age in a person's private life may be transformed into a positive life trajectory, e.g. through marriage. This may lead to improved conditions, enabling access to better quality employment.

So, what is the more specific relationship between working conditions and the two living conditions domains (general life satisfaction and quality of social relations) selected in the study? The

¹⁷ See, for example, the work of Inglehardt (1977), regarding changes in values and the increasing importance of post-materialistic values.

interrelationship between working conditions and general life satisfaction can be discussed along a number of lines of reasoning. Firstly, the influence of working conditions depends on the relative importance of work in the context of the individual's various life domains. For example, has the person a strong work orientation, or are working conditions of greater importance? Secondly, one can assume an indirect positive effect of bad/good working conditions on general life satisfaction, depending on existing aspirations. These aspirations can be influenced either by the work conditions of other social groups or by experiences in other life domains. Lastly, there is the interrelationship between working conditions and the social relationship with friends and with family. This aspect is mainly taken up in the discussion on work–life balance, which has previously been presented¹⁸.

Methodology

The report's analysis is based on a dataset constructed from two original datasets: one from data of the 'Standard Eurobarometer wave 56.1' (2001), and another from data of the 'Candidate countries Eurobarometer' (2002).

Overall, the survey covers some 28 countries: the former EU15 Member States, the 10 new Member States (NMS) that joined in 2004, and Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey (three candidate countries – CC3). The report's analysis of working conditions is based on two sets of questions, previously used in the Eurobarometers.

The first set is based on the following opening question: How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements describing your job? Do you strongly agree, agree, neither agree/nor disagree, disagree or strongly disagree?

1. My job requires that I work very hard;
2. I never seem to have enough time to get everything done in my job;
3. I often have to work extra time, over and above the formal hours of my job;
4. I work almost all the time at very high speed;
5. I work almost all the time to tight deadlines;
6. Most of the time my work involves short repetitive hand or arm movements;
7. I have a great deal of influence in deciding what tasks I do;
8. I have a great deal of influence in deciding how to do my tasks;
9. I am willing to work harder than I have to in order to help this organisation/company succeed;
10. I find that my values and this organisation's values are very similar;
11. I am proud to be working for this organisation/company;
12. I would turn down another job elsewhere with more pay in order to stay with this organisation/company;
13. I am likely to get a better job in this organisation/company in the next three years;
14. I am likely to get a better job with another employer in the next three years.

The second set is based on the following question: How often do you:

¹⁸ Overall, it is important to note that there is a complex relationship between working and living conditions, which is only partly covered by the conceptual framework presented.

1. find your work stressful?
2. work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions?
3. have headaches as a result of work?
4. have muscular pains as a result of work?
5. get verbally abused, for example, by clients, patients or pupils?
6. come home from work exhausted?
7. keep worrying about job problems after you leave work?
8. find it difficult to unwind at the end of the workday?
9. find that your job prevents you from giving the time you want to your partner or family?
10. feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home?
11. feel too tired after work to go out with friends?
12. find that your partner/family gets fed up with the pressure of your job?

Single indicators were also used in the Foundation's working conditions surveys. The surveys also contained standard background variables. The data for Turkey, however, do not provide information on the social (personal) status of the respondent. Therefore, in tables where findings are analysed according to social status, the analysis is limited to 27 countries only¹⁹.

For the interpretation of figures, it is important to take into account the distortion resulting from rejected answers. It is reasonable to assume that workers with difficult working conditions, particularly those with 'antisocial' working hours, are more difficult to contact and are, therefore, less likely to be interviewed. For this reason, it can be assumed that the data, to some extent, show a more favourable picture than in reality and that the rate of such distortion varies according to individual social classes.

The second factor causing distortion is one that is inherent in most international comparative studies. Subjective answers to questions developed in such surveys depend, on language and appropriate translation and, also, on existing cultural differences. While the distortion impacts of language and translation-related differences have been reduced to a minimum – by validating items – cultural differences between countries cannot be fully eliminated. For example, in countries where the impact of high work intensity on weakening family ties is frequently discussed in the media and in everyday conversation, it is more likely that respondents will be more sensitive to this issue, than respondents in countries where those issues raise less public interest.

Overview of report

In Chapter 1, the report provides an overview of the quality of work of employees in an enlarged Europe of 28 countries. It also provides a systematic comparison between the results of the Eurobarometer data and the results of the Foundation's Third European Working Conditions Survey, in 2000.

In Chapter 2, the focus turns to the dynamic relationship between quality of work and quality of social relations in Europe, from the point of view of employees. This includes the self-reported effect of work on social relations, as well as a statistical interference analysis of the association between various dimensions of quality of work, and satisfaction with social and family life.

¹⁹ As a result, Turkey had to be fully excluded from the multivariate modelling project.

Chapter 3 explores the influence of working conditions on general life satisfaction – one of the key measures of subjective quality of life. A bivariate analysis will be followed by a multivariate approach.

The conclusions in Chapter 4 outline the empirical results of the ongoing European policy debate on quality of work, and provide recommendations for additional work by the Foundation on this important topic.

Working conditions in an enlarged Europe

Introduction

This report uses seven key dimensions of working conditions, for mapping quality of work in an enlarged EU. They are: physical and psychological working conditions, work autonomy, unemployment experience, duration of weekly working time, work intensity, and career opportunities. The overall purpose of this chapter, however, is not to give a detailed and in-depth account of current perceived working conditions in Europe²⁰, but to present basic information on working conditions, in order to understand and interpret the dynamic relationship between working and living conditions – which will be discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

In contrast to other Foundation studies, it was decided to base the description of working conditions on complex measures, using indices encompassing several indicators. Indices provide the opportunity to reduce the amount of data, as well as describe the relevant dimension with a higher degree of complexity, and analyse the interrelationship between working and living conditions in a more focused way.

Obviously, various dimensions of working conditions are, to some degree, interdependent. An initial insight into the degree of interdependence is necessary for a proper interpretation of results. Hence, the analysis will first examine the correlation between the indices. For example, do these indices measure different dimensions of quality of work? Statistically, are they only weakly related, or is there a high degree of interdependence, which would enable a reduction in the number of indices used?

Table 1 Pearson’s correlation between the indices measuring different dimensions of working conditions

	Physical working conditions	Psychological working conditions	Work intensity	Long-term unemployment experience	Internal career opportunities	Autonomy
Physical working conditions		0.415	0.319	0.038	0.056	0.018
Psychological working conditions			0.185	0.050	0.054	0.043
Work intensity				-0.013	0.056	-0.089
Long-term unemployment experience					0.012	0.062
Internal career opportunities						0.049

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Table 1 correlates the indices with each other. As most correlation coefficients are under 0.1, this indicates a relatively high degree of independence between indices. The only exception here is the relationship between physical and psychological working conditions and work intensity. However, in this instance, there is only one significant correlation of around 0.4, between the physical and the psychological conditions.

Further analysis of underlying trends in working conditions is provided in this report through a systematic comparison with other empirical results, particularly with the results of the Third

²⁰ The Foundation provides this information in various publications based on its working conditions survey.

European Working Conditions Survey (2000). This survey has been chosen as a benchmark, as it provides the most systematic and comprehensive account of working conditions in Europe, from a comparative and longitudinal perspective.

Such a comparison is, however, difficult for several reasons:

- Data have been collected at different points in time: data for the Third European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) were collected in 2000, and for the Eurobarometer in 2001 and 2002.
- The EWCS provides no integrated data for the 28 countries and separates the results for Turkey from results for the other 27 countries. Consequently, no overall comparison with the results for the three candidate countries is possible.
- The EWCS only presents grouped results for the EU15 countries and for the combined new Member States (NMS) and candidate countries; as a result, comparisons cannot be made with the results of both surveys for the NMS.
- The EWCS presents its results for individual indicators, hence it includes no composite measures or indices. In the Eurobarometer, on the other hand, analysis is based on indices, so the comparison will often be more 'qualitative' than 'quantitative'.
- The specific indicators used in both surveys overlap important dimensions only marginally. For example, on the issue of physical working conditions, the focus in both surveys is on different dimensions. The Eurobarometer Quality of Life Survey focuses mainly on demanding effects of physical working conditions, while the EWCS measures more of the actual conditions relating to the physical work environment. The other extreme is represented by the dimension of work autonomy, where more or less the same indicators are used. Consequently, in certain dimensions, only general trends can be compared with each other.

Physical working conditions

Working under demanding and tiring physical working conditions seems to be a significant feature of the 'old' economy, which preceded the knowledge economy. Traditionally, work in agriculture, extracting industries, steel mills or in certain parts of manufacturing has been associated with a higher percentage of unfavourable physical working conditions. Better work organisation and technology have, however, made conditions more favourable in these industries. Risks to physical working conditions have now become a challenge in certain parts of the service sector, for example, in certain occupations in the retail sector, in hospitals and in the care for the elderly²¹.

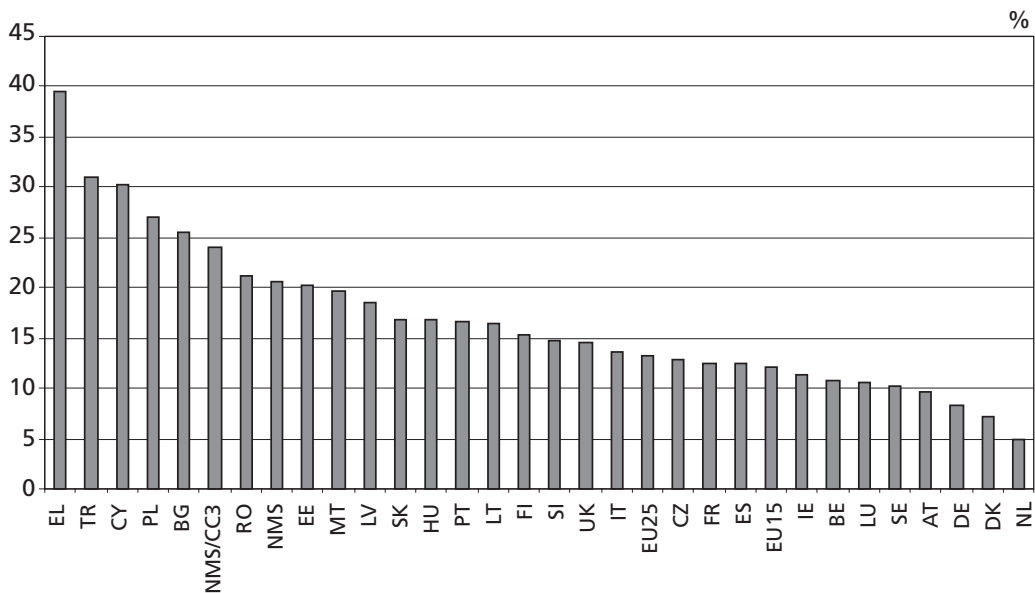
The index for physical working conditions in the survey is developed on the basis of answers to the following three statements:

- work in dangerous or unhealthy conditions;
- have muscular pains as a result of work;
- have headaches as a result of work.

²¹ It should be pointed out, however, that it is often difficult nowadays to separate the unfavourable impacts of psychological and physical working conditions in many workplaces, a reality which is borne out by the relatively high correlation coefficient between these two indices.

The first indicator represents a general impression regarding demanding physical working conditions, whereas the second and third indicators measure possible consequences of physical work for the employee's health. The indicator 'having headaches' is a good example of the difficulty that arises in distinguishing clearly between physical and psychological working conditions, as headaches can be a consequence of negative physical or psychological conditions. For each indicator, the employee was given the following response options: 'always', 'often', 'sometimes', 'rarely', 'never' and 'not applicable'. Demanding working conditions are defined if the 'always' answer was selected at least once, or the 'often' answer in at least two cases, within the three statements. Using this definition, 15% of employees work under demanding physical working conditions in the countries surveyed.²²

Figure 1 Workers exposed to demanding physical working conditions, by country



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Table 2 shows the average chances of working under unfavourable physical working conditions in the various country groupings. The figures clearly reveal that physical working conditions, both in the NMS and in the candidate countries, are considerably less favourable than in the former EU15 countries. In the EU15, around 10% of employees reported demanding physical working conditions; in the NMS, this figure is doubled, while in the candidate countries it is nearly three times as high.

With regard to individual countries, the situation is more complex (see Figure 1 above). Evidently, Greece is the country with the most unfavourable conditions, with 40% of employees reporting demanding physical working conditions. In relation to the NMS, the Czech Republic and Slovenia demonstrate figures closer to the EU15 average. However, a worrying trend of demanding physical working conditions in the NMS has been reported in Cyprus, Poland and Estonia.

²² The reliability analysis for the index shows a satisfactory result with a Cronbach alpha of 0.69.

Overall, it is fair to say that countries in south-eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Turkey) are similar in that they show considerably worse than average physical working conditions. Conversely, countries in central Europe, Germany and some of its neighbouring countries (Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands) show figures under 10%.

Table 2 Workers experiencing demanding physical working conditions

	Lowest value %	Highest value %	Average value %
EU15	5	40	12
New Member States (NMS)	13	30	21
EU25	5	40	13
Candidate countries (CC3)	21	31	28
Total	5	40	15

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

With regard to age and sex, physical working conditions in the 28 European countries show no significant variation. For example, 16% of men and 13% of women experience demanding physical working conditions, and the maximum difference between the various age groups is four percentage points. Nevertheless, striking differences can be observed in relation to educational and occupational class. Data obtained for these dimensions clearly show that a disadvantageous labour market position and low levels of education can lead to higher chances of working in demanding physical working conditions in the countries surveyed.

Chances of demanding working conditions are twice as likely among those who have left school before the age of 15 (21%), than among employees with a university degree. Of course, there is a considerable interrelationship between educational status and future position at work. Based on the Erikson/Goldthorpe classification of occupational class, farmers and skilled workers experience the worst physical working conditions, with nearly every fifth worker being exposed to unfavourable physical working conditions. Self-employed and non-skilled blue-collar workers only fare slightly better. The best physical working conditions are reported among the service class of professionals and people in management positions.

Just as the situation of workers in the NMS and candidate countries appears to be worse than in the former EU15 countries, the relative situation of the occupational classes also differs. In particular, the relative position of skilled and non-skilled blue-collar workers differs more in the EU15 countries, compared to other countries. In the countries outside the EU15, the situation of skilled and non-skilled blue-collar workers is not as good as that of farmers, and is significantly worse than that of self-employed people and the higher service class. The range between the highest and lowest exposure to demanding physical working conditions is 20 percentage points within the NMS and candidate countries and only 10 percentage points within the former EU15.

The final part of this chapter compares the results of the Eurobarometer survey with those of the EWCS (2000). The latter outlines information in relation to the exposure of workers to physical risks²³ and to complaints related to the design of work stations. It also includes comments on

²³ Classified as: vibrations, noise, heat, cold, inhalation of vapours, fumes, etc; also, handling dangerous substances; radiation; painful or tiring positions; heavy loads.

measures that could help prevent occupational risks, such as information for workers on potential risks and the provision of protective equipment. This focus differs significantly from the underlying approach of the Eurobarometer Quality of Life Survey.

Taking into account the degree of limited comparability, the overall results for physical risks in both surveys show relatively similar results for the former EU15 countries. The EWCS shows variations regarding permanent exposure to demanding physical working conditions for some key indicators (noise, heavy load, painful position) of between 11% and 18%, whereas the Quality of Life Survey shows an average of 12% in its composite index of unfavourable physical working conditions. If one measures work involving physical risks at least one quarter of the working time, the exposure of workers is significantly higher. Between 29% and 47% of workers in the EU15 bear some physical risks. A second slight variation is evident with regard to the relative difference between physical working conditions in the former EU15 and the combined value for the NMS and candidate countries. The Quality of Life Eurobarometer identifies significant differences, whereas the EWCS observes similar conditions in most dimensions in the two country groupings.

In relation to gender, the EWCS indicates better physical working conditions for women, with one important exception, namely, equal exposure among both sexes to painful positions. In contrast, the Quality of Life Eurobarometer reveals similar exposure to demanding physical working conditions among both men and women. A similar difference is evident in relation to age groups. The Eurobarometer observes little difference among the different age groups, whereas the EWCS highlights more demanding physical working conditions among the 25–39 year age group. No variation can be observed in relation to occupational class. Both surveys agree on the higher exposure to demanding conditions among qualified and unqualified blue-collar workers and among agricultural workers.

In summary, both surveys show congruent results in relation to exposure to detrimental physical working conditions, as far as the EU15 and occupational classes are concerned. They differ with regard to the assessment of relative conditions in the NMS and candidate countries, and in relation to variations by age and sex. Overall, the results of the EWCS seem to be more reliable, due to the wider range of issues covered and more sophisticated measurement tools.

Psychological working conditions

In the aftermath of the change from an industrial economy to a service- and knowledge-based one, many concepts on quality of work highlight the increasing significance of demanding psychological working conditions leading to, in particular, increased levels of stress. They emphasise an inverse relationship between psychological risks and the risk of adverse physical working conditions. Accordingly, a decrease in physical workload can be accompanied by an increased risk of demanding psychological working conditions.

Psychological working conditions were surveyed using the following questions:

- Do you find your work stressful?
- Do you get verbally abused, for example, by clients, patients or pupils?²⁴

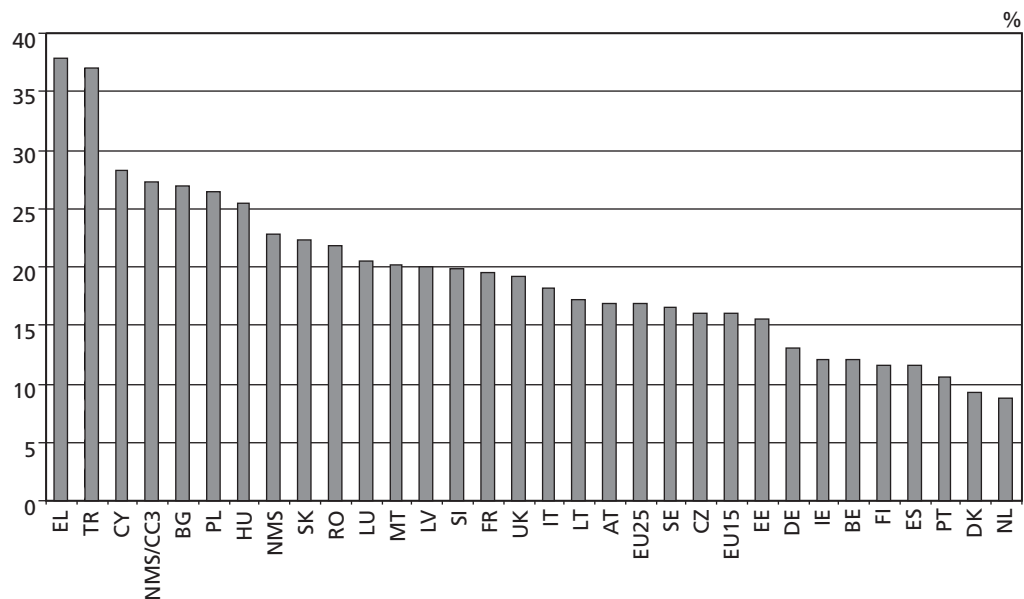
²⁴ This indicator is rather one-sided as it leaves out possible abuse from colleagues and superiors.

- Do you come home from work exhausted?
- Do you find it difficult to unwind at the end of the workday?

For each indicator, the employee could choose the following responses: ‘always’, ‘often’, ‘sometimes’ ‘rarely’, ‘never’ and ‘not applicable’. Three of these indicators measure the psychological consequences of demanding work conditions, whereas the fourth indicator (‘verbal abuse’) assesses a work situation which usually leads to negative psychological conditions. Unfavourable psychological working conditions were defined if the ‘always’ response was selected at least once and the ‘often’ response at least once, or if the ‘often’ response was selected at least three times. By this definition, 19% of workers in an enlarged Europe work under unfavourable psychological conditions²⁵.

Similar to physical conditions, there are considerable differences in psychological working conditions between the former EU15 and the NMS/candidate countries. In the EU15, 16% of workers report unfavourable conditions, while exactly double this figure in the CC3 report unfavourable conditions. Some 23% of employees in the NMS reported unfavourable psychological working conditions (see Table 3).

Figure 2 Workers exposed to demanding psychological working conditions, by country



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

All three country groupings show significant internal variations. In the EU15, Greek workers report by far the greatest exposure to demanding psychological working conditions. Conversely, employees in the Netherlands, Scandinavia, Portugal and Spain report psychological conditions nearly four times better than in Greece. The worst conditions in the NMS are reported in Cyprus, Poland and Hungary. However, figures for those countries are still 10 percentage points lower than the Greek figures. The only other country where workers report similar levels of demanding psychological working conditions is Turkey. This indicates that there is a high representation of

²⁵ The quality of the index was tested and provided a value of Cronbach alpha 0.68.

Turkish and Greek workers in the categories relating to detrimental physical and psychological working conditions. To an extent, this raises a question mark over the hypothesis that there is an inverse relationship between quality of physical and psychological working conditions.

Table 3 Workers experiencing demanding psychological working conditions

	Lowest value %	Highest value %	Average value %
EU15	9	38	16
New Member States (NMS)	16	28	23
EU25	9	38	17
Candidate countries (CC3)	22	37	32
NMS and CC3	16	37	27
Total	9	38	19

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The Eurobarometer analysis also examines unfavourable psychological working conditions in Europe for specific social groups. In this instance, the results are relatively straightforward, as none of the four dimensions – sex, age, education and occupational class – shows any significant variation. Negative psychological working conditions seem to relate mainly to national and cultural factors, more so than to socio-structural and demographic factors.

Although some correlation between demanding physical and psychological working conditions has been identified, it is not of a fundamental nature. Working conditions for over 75% of workers are neither physically nor psychologically demanding, but 9% work under both demanding physical and psychological working conditions. The majority of those who experience demanding psychological working conditions claim that their physical working conditions are not demanding; more than 40% of those who experience demanding physical working conditions do not complain of unfavourable psychological working conditions.

How do these results compare with the Third European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS)? This survey includes two relevant indicators: work-related stress and general fatigue. In both country groupings – the EU15 and the combined NMS/candidate countries (excluding Turkey) – 28% of employees report work-related stress. Overall, the feeling of fatigue is more unevenly distributed, at nearly a quarter of employees in the EU15 but over 40% in the NMS/candidate countries.

Based on relative diverse indicators, the comparison between both surveys has to be more qualitative than quantitative. Overall, the EWCS suggests a higher level of exposure to demanding psychological working conditions than the Eurobarometer survey. Both studies concur in relation to the identification of more serious problems in the NMS and particularly in the candidate countries. With regard to group differences, the EWCS identifies significantly high levels of work-related stress in higher occupational groups, whereas the Eurobarometer survey shows a more equal distribution. Results of other studies on work-related stress would seem to correlate more with the empirical results of the EWCS²⁶.

²⁶ See, for example, the report of Alber and Kohler (2004, p. 19).

Work autonomy

Theoretical concepts relating to the work process and to its effects on productivity, motivation, identification and humanisation of work emphasise the significance of autonomy at work for employees. Accordingly, higher degrees of autonomy are perceived as being beneficial, in the long term, both for employees and for the company.

In the Eurobarometer survey, work autonomy is measured according to two indicators²⁷:

- I have a great deal of influence in deciding what tasks I do;
- I have a great deal of influence in deciding how to do my tasks.

For each indicator, the employee could choose the following responses: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree' or 'not applicable'. Respondents were classified as having low work autonomy if they strongly agreed or agreed with both statements. Typically, these people feel that they have no influence either over their job content or over the way they perform their job. About 16% of the workers in the 28 countries fall into this category.

Overall, the extent of lack of autonomy of workers in Europe is between one sixth and one quarter of the total workforce. It is nearly 10 percentage points higher in the NMS and candidate countries than in the former EU15 (see Table 4).

Table 4 Workers with low autonomy at work

	Lowest value %	Highest value %	Average value %
EU15	4	21	14
New Member States (NMS)	16	30	23
EU25	4	30	16
Candidate countries (CC3)	20	31	22
NMS and CC3	16	31	23
Total	4	31	16

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

European countries differ significantly in relation to the level of work autonomy enjoyed by workers. In Denmark, Luxembourg and Sweden, only a negligible proportion of workers (less than 5%) believe that their work can be characterised by a lack of work autonomy. In other countries – for example, Bulgaria, Hungary and Lithuania – seven times more people (almost one third of all employees) believe that they suffer from a lack of autonomy.

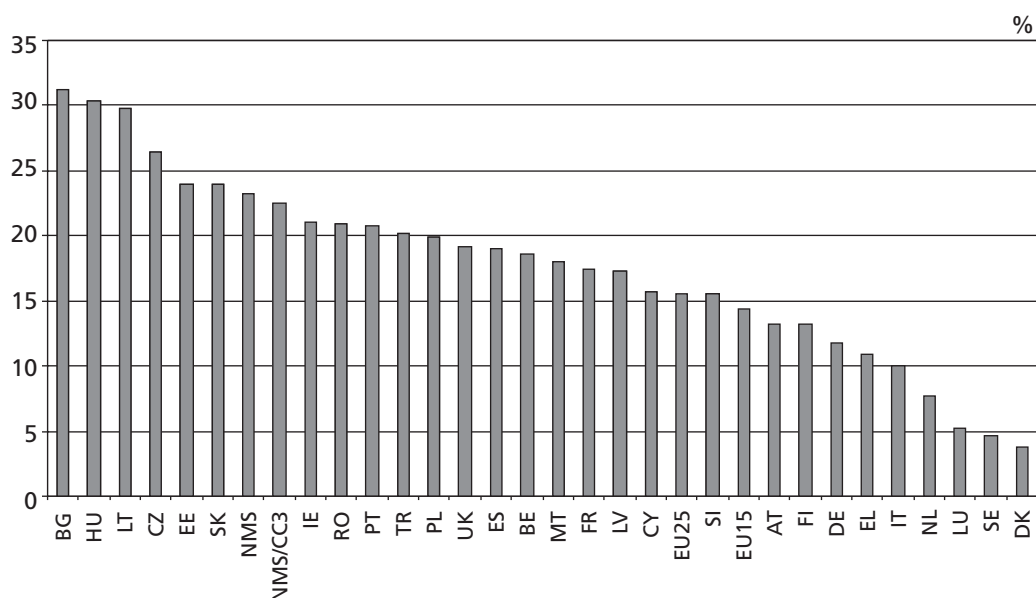
It is noteworthy that the level of non-autonomous work is higher than the EU average in each of the NMS. Cyprus, Latvia, Malta and Slovenia show percentage values close to the EU average, while Poland is only slightly higher. The remaining five countries – the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania and Slovakia – have significantly lower levels of autonomy, compared with the

²⁷ Usually, autonomy at work encompasses more dimensions. Due to limited available data, the analysis in this report includes only two dimensions.

EU15. Among the candidate countries, Romania and Turkey demonstrate a moderately poor level of work autonomy, while in Bulgaria the level is particularly low (see Figure 3).

Among the former EU15 countries, Belgium, France, Ireland, Portugal, Spain and the UK show a low level of autonomy, which is comparable to higher levels of autonomy in the NMS.

Figure 3 Workers experiencing low autonomy at work, by country



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Not surprisingly, the degree of autonomy among employees varies strongly according to socio-economic status.

Opportunities for greater work autonomy increase with age. Among the youngest workers, the percentage with sufficient work autonomy is around 75%. By 25 years of age, this percentage reaches 85%, and rises further to 88% among the over 55s.

Education is of similar importance. Employees with a third level education have significantly higher levels of work autonomy than employees who left school with a lower secondary level education. An even stronger factor regarding autonomy is occupational status. While almost one third of non-skilled labourers indicate that their work autonomy is low, only 22% of skilled labourers and 17% of routine non-manual workers indicate low work autonomy. The percentage of people with no work autonomy was much lower among farmers (7%) and negligible among highly qualified white-collar and self-employed workers.

Gender differences are less significant, as there is only a discrepancy of five percentage points between men and women.

The EWCS features two similar questions regarding work autonomy: a) Ability to change order of tasks; b) Ability to change methods of work. In addition, the survey provides information regarding the flexibility of employees to take breaks and to take time off.

The first two indicators show a significantly lower level of work autonomy than in the Eurobarometer survey. In the EU15, around one third of employees lack any autonomy to change their order of tasks or methods of work. In the combined NMS and candidate countries (excluding Turkey), between 35% and 40% of employees work to given rules. The relative difference between the country groupings is therefore confirmed. There is also agreement between both surveys in relation to the lack of autonomy among employees of lower occupational status and in relation to the minor differences in this regard between sexes.

Unemployment experience

Employment security is another important dimension of quality of work. This can be measured by the length of job tenure, perceived job security, various indicators in relation to employability, or an employee's history of unemployment. The survey questionnaire in the Eurobarometer inquired about any periods of unemployment over the last five years and their combined lengths. From the data, a three-grade typology was prepared:

- persons classified according to the category, 'no, or no substantial, experience of unemployment', who have never been unemployed or who have been unemployed over the last five years but only once for a period of less than three months, or more than once, but for a period of less than one week at a time. People in this category experience 'frictional' unemployment, due to normal mobility within the labour market. This type of unemployment has little or no effect on a reduced subjective feeling of employment security.
- unemployment periods longer than this are categorised as 'substantial unemployment experience', caused by cyclical or structural factors in labour demand. This may affect a person's life situation in terms of financial position, or has the potential to cause psychological or physical health problems. Such an experience significantly reduces the feeling of employment security.
- persons heavily impacted by unemployment ('long-term unemployment') are defined as those who have been unemployed for at least two years over the last five years, regardless of the number of unemployment spells within this period²⁸. The impacts listed above may be felt to a much higher degree when long-term unemployment is experienced. It also means that the labour market position of the potential employee becomes marginalised and that the sense of employment security will be relatively low.

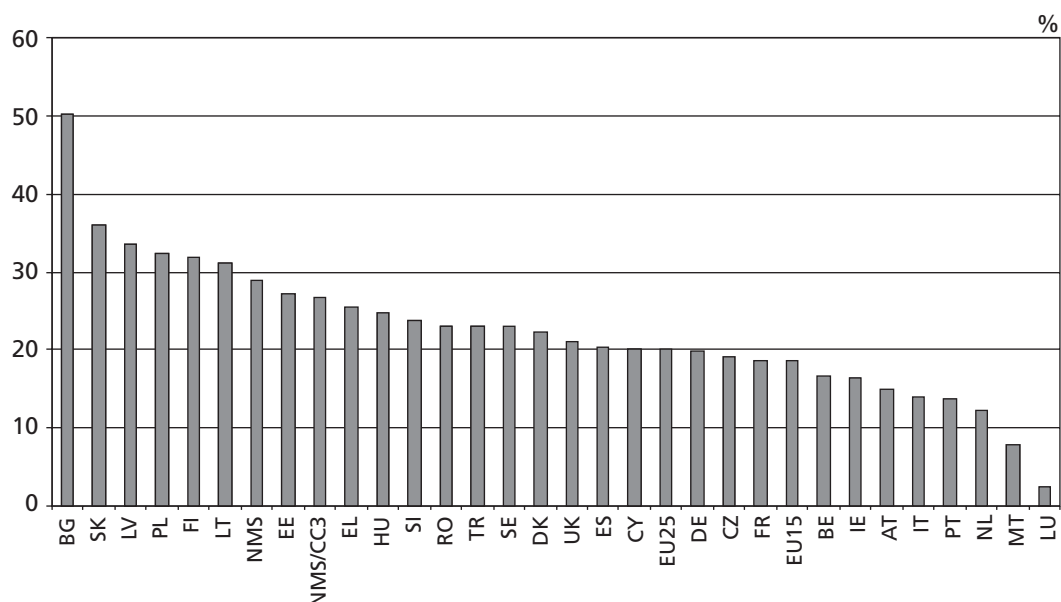
According to the data, there is a wide variation in unemployment experience. If one disregards small countries with very good (i.e. low) ratios – such as Luxembourg and Malta – and only considers countries with a population of at least one million people, the percentage of unemployment experience is between 12% and 50%.

In the EU15, only Finland has a relatively high level of unemployment experience by population (32%); otherwise, this ratio falls to between 12% and 26%. Unemployment experience is more moderate in Austria, Belgium, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal. The percentage in these countries is close to the present EU average, but lower than the combined average of France,

²⁸ Students and pensioners were not included, as they would have distorted the results.

Germany, Spain and the UK. In Denmark, Sweden and, particularly Greece, the percentage of the population with unemployment experience is higher (see Figure 4).

Figure 4 Unemployment experience, by country



Source: Candidate Country Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

In relation to country groupings, in the NMS the average number of people with unemployment experience is nearly 30% and is therefore 10 percentage points higher than in the EU15 and CC3 (see Table 5). These figures are an indication of the massive economic restructuring processes that are underway, particularly in the former Communist countries, and of the higher levels of unemployment that have resulted from these processes.

Table 5 Unemployment experience, by population

	Lowest value %	Highest value %	Average value %
EU15	3	32	19
New Member States (NMS)	8	36	29
EU25	3	36	20
Candidate countries (CC3)	23	50	25
NMS and CC3	8	50	27
Total	3	50	21

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

However, figures for the NMS, as a group, do not accurately reflect the situation in terms of individual countries' unemployment experience. In Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Malta, the percentage of unemployment experience is low. The Estonian, Hungarian, Lithuanian and Slovenian percentage values are comparable to the higher levels of unemployment experience in the EU15. However, in Latvia, Poland and Slovakia, unemployment is higher and accounts for one third of all potential employees.

Within the candidate country group, there are significant differences: the percentage values for Romania and Turkey are close to the higher values within the EU, while Bulgaria shows a remarkably high percentage. In Bulgaria, half of all employees have been unemployed for a prolonged period over the last five years.

Not surprisingly, long-term unemployment and general unemployment experience by country are strongly related to each other, with a correlation coefficient of Pearson R2 0.89. More specifically, the incidence of long-term unemployment can be classified as low in Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal and Sweden. In Spain, the percentage is close to the EU average. The Belgian, UK and Greek values are higher, while the Finnish percentage is even higher again.

Within the NMS, experience of long-term unemployment is low in Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Malta. Poland has been badly hit by long-term unemployment, which affects almost 20% of the population. Among the candidate countries, Romania shows relatively favourable values, but Turkey less so. In Bulgaria, almost one third of potential employees have been out of work for two years or more over the last five years (see Figure 5).

Looking at the overall country groupings, in the EU15, 7% of employees have experienced long-term unemployment. In the acceding countries, this figure is almost double the EU average at 13% (see Table 6).

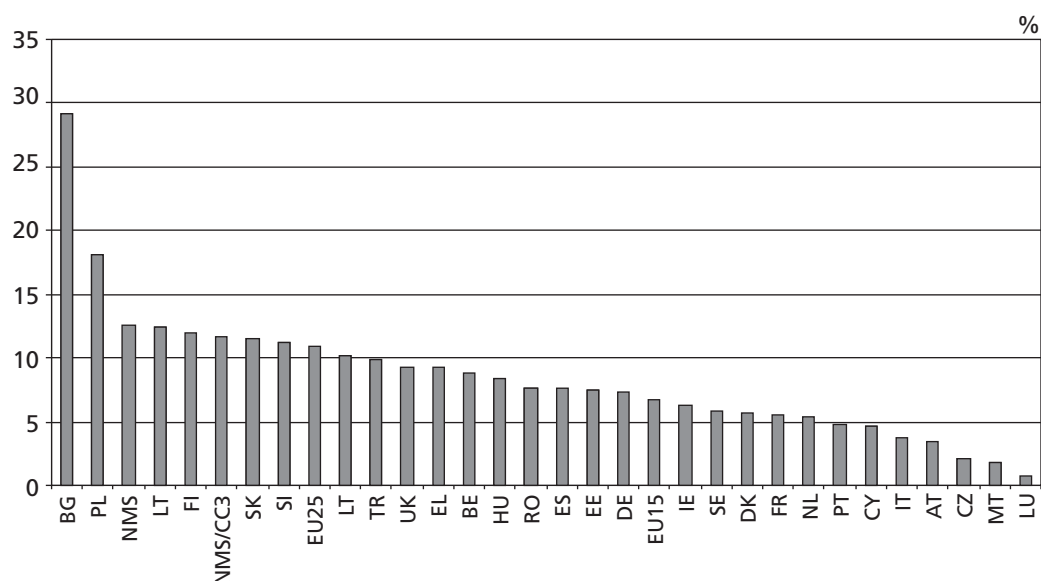
Table 6 Long-term unemployment experience, by population

	Lowest value %	Highest value %	Average value %
EU15	1	12	7
New Member States (NMS)	2	18	13
EU25	1	18	8
Candidate countries (CC3)	8	29	11
NMS and CC3	2	29	12
Total	1	29	8

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

So, how do these results compare with official unemployment statistics? The frequency of unemployment experience is not identical to the official unemployment rates, which reflect a certain point in time, and are published regularly. This is probably due to the fact that the unemployment specified in the questionnaire differs in two ways. Firstly, respondents were allowed to report unemployment periods, even if they were not considered officially unemployed. Secondly, the official unemployment rate is a static indicator, while the variable of unemployment experience reflects the history of unemployment experience over the last five years. Thus, the rate of unemployment experience detected by the survey is significantly higher. The weighted unemployment rate calculated for the 28 countries surveyed was about 9%. However, a total of 22% of respondents reported unemployment experience in the survey.

Figure 5 Long-term unemployment experience, by country



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

On a country-by-country basis, a strong correlation between the unemployment rate and frequency of unemployment experience is evident (Pearson R2: 0.77). However, in some countries, the official unemployment rate is much lower than expected, on the basis of unemployment experience. This can be attributed to differences in unemployment schemes and socio-politics, but also to different unemployment dynamics over a five-year period. In Austria, Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland and Sweden, the proportion of those who experienced unemployment is four times higher than the official unemployment rate. The two figures are very close in Luxembourg, Malta and Spain. In the remaining countries, the proportion of those with unemployment experience is two to three times higher than the official unemployment rate.

The relationship between the two unemployment measures can also be captured, by examining the relative changes in the ranking between countries. Among the EU15 countries, the official unemployment rates for Belgium, France, Germany, Italy and Spain are lower than those outlined in the more dynamic five-year assessment. The same applies for the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Malta and Poland among the NMS (see Table 7).

This study also examines the countries' unemployment experience, according to specific social features. In an analysis of the chances of becoming unemployed, by occupational class, it is no surprise that farmers, self-employed people and managers show the lowest values, of around one in 10 workers over the last five years. White-collar, routine workers, on the other hand, lost their jobs almost twice as often. The chances of becoming unemployed are significantly higher among manual workers: 27% of skilled and 36% of non-skilled workers experienced unemployment in the last five years.

In relation to long-term unemployment, the social pattern of unemployment experience is even more distinct. Long-term or multiple and prolonged unemployment hardly impacts at all on managers and high-qualified, white-collar workers: only 3% of them have had this experience in the last five years. The percentage is also relatively favourable among routine non-manual, white-

collar workers, self-employed people and farmers' groups (4%–7%). However, the figure rises to 10% among skilled manual workers and to 14% among non-skilled manual workers. These results confirm long-standing OECD findings that unqualified blue-collar workers, in particular, have been hit by structural changes in developed economies.

Table 7 Rank order of countries by unemployment rate and unemployment experience

	Rank by unemployment rate %	Rank by unemployment experience %
Luxembourg	1	1
Netherlands	2	3
Austria	3	7
Ireland	4	8
Portugal	5	5
Denmark	6	16
Cyprus	7	14
Malta	8	2
UK	9	15
Sweden	10	17
Hungary	11	21
Turkey	12	19
Slovenia	13	20
Romania	14	18
Belgium	15	9
Germany	16	12
Czech Republic	17	11
France	18	10
Finland	19	25
Italy	20	6
Greece	21	22
Estonia	22	23
Latvia	23	27
Spain	24	13
Lithuania	25	24
Bulgaria	26	29
Poland	27	26
Slovakia	28	28

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001; 'Unemployment in Europe', 2001.

Unemployment periods of over two years have affected the same proportion of men and women (8%). However, short periods of unemployment are slightly more frequent among men (15%) than women (11%).

Over the last five years, long-term unemployment has mostly affected those in the 25–54 year age group, with a frequency of occurrence of 8%–9%. In the oldest age group, the probability of unemployment is lower, and lower again in the youngest group. At the same time, as workers get older, the chance of experiencing shorter periods of unemployment decreases significantly. Over 20% of young people have experienced this kind of unemployment over the last five years. This compares with 14% in the 25–39 year age group, 10% in the 40–54 year age group and 5% among the over-55 year olds.

Shorter unemployment periods can occur, regardless of educational level. However, the probability of experiencing 'long-term unemployment' largely depends on educational level. Some 5% of

people with college level education experience long-term unemployment; this figure doubles among those with the lowest level of education.

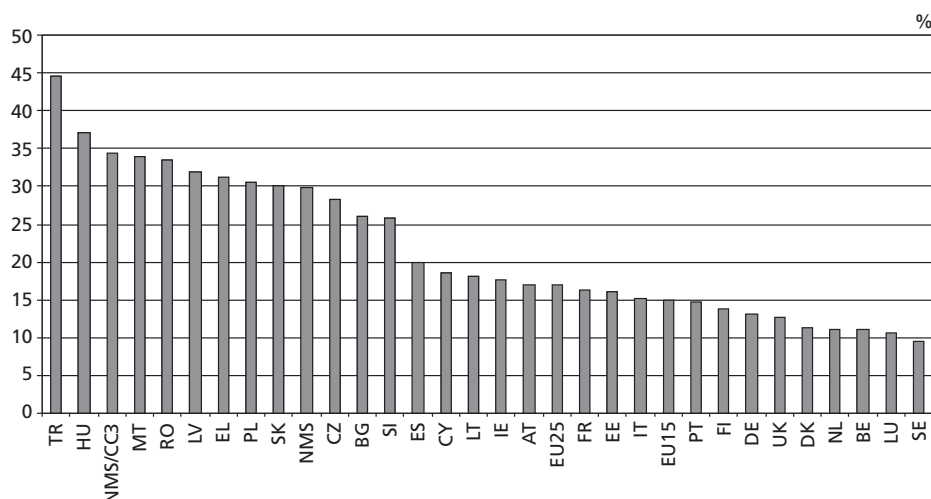
The Third European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) provides no information on unemployment experience or on perceived employment security of employees.

Length of working hours

Length of working hours is also an important factor in relation to quality of work. In particular, hours of work that frequently exceed the standard duration of work are regarded as detrimental to health as well as to family and social life. In order to measure the frequency of excess hours of work, respondents in the Eurobarometer survey were asked to report their usual factual hours of work per week. Based on existing legal regulations of working time in the EU, work performed frequently over 48 hours a week is considered as excess work.²⁹ Separate categories were established for part-time work (20 hours a week or less), reduced full-time work (21–31 hours a week), and full-time work (32–48 hours a week)³⁰.

The figures from the Eurobarometer survey reveal that the ratio of employed persons working over 48 hours a week varies widely throughout the 28 countries³¹. The findings underline the established fact that, in the NMS and candidate countries, the proportion of employees spending a large amount of time at work is generally higher. Among the EU15 countries, the proportion of employees working over 48 hours a week is lowest in Sweden (10%) and highest in Greece (31%). In the NMS, this figure is between 16% and 37%. Among the candidate countries, the figure reaches as high as 45% in Turkey (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 Employed persons working 48 or more hours per week, by country



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

²⁹ Limits defined in the European Working Time Directive (1998) were considered authoritative when establishing the categories, although the official weekly working hours in many countries are shorter than this. Reference periods defined in the directive could not be considered.

³⁰ This categorisation is strengthened by the results of the most recent working conditions survey, in which 30–40 hours a week was found to have different meanings in the candidate countries and in the Member States. While this number of hours was considered part time in the candidate countries, it was often considered full time in some of the EU countries.

³¹ It has to be pointed out that the evaluation of working conditions in this study is less accurate than in many specifically topic-oriented surveys.

From a country groupings perspective, the average length of the working week is significantly longer in the NMS and CC3 than in the former EU15 countries. In the EU15, 15% of the working population frequently work 48 hours or more per week, while 30% of the population in the NMS and 34% in the CC3 frequently work excess hours.

The EWCS confirms this structural difference between the country groupings. However, among the EU15 and combined NMS/candidate countries, it identifies a higher percentage of 21% and 38% respectively. This is partly due to the fact that this survey defines 45 hours or more per week as excess working hours.

Work intensity

Work intensity is a key indicator of quality of work. It is thought to play an important role in various concepts relating to the humanisation of work and to the socio-technical approach of work design. In order to capture this important dimension, the Eurobarometer survey established a work intensity index, composed of five statements:

- My job requires that I work very hard;
- I never seem to have enough time to get everything done in my job;
- I often have to work extra time, over and above the formal hours of my job;
- I work almost all the time at very high speed;
- I work almost all the time to tight deadlines.

These statements were scored by respondents on a scale of one, for 'strongly disagree', to five, for 'strongly agree'. Missing answers were replaced by the appropriate median for all five index-producing variables, in order to prevent a decrease in the number of respondents³².

A dichotomous variable was then created from the five statements. According to the definition used here, the respondent is exposed to high degrees of work intensity, if he or she agrees fully with at least one of the above statements and agrees, to some degree, with all of the other statements. Based on this definition, 16% of the working population in the 28 countries surveyed have high levels of work intensity. The highest level of work intensity was recorded among the EU15 countries (18%), whereas a slightly lower level was recorded among the candidate countries and NMS (12% and 13% respectively) – see Table 8. An inverse relationship between length of working time and work intensity was recorded at country level: evidently, shorter average working times go hand-in-hand with higher work intensity in the former EU15 countries, and, in the NMS, longer working hours are accompanied by less work intensity.

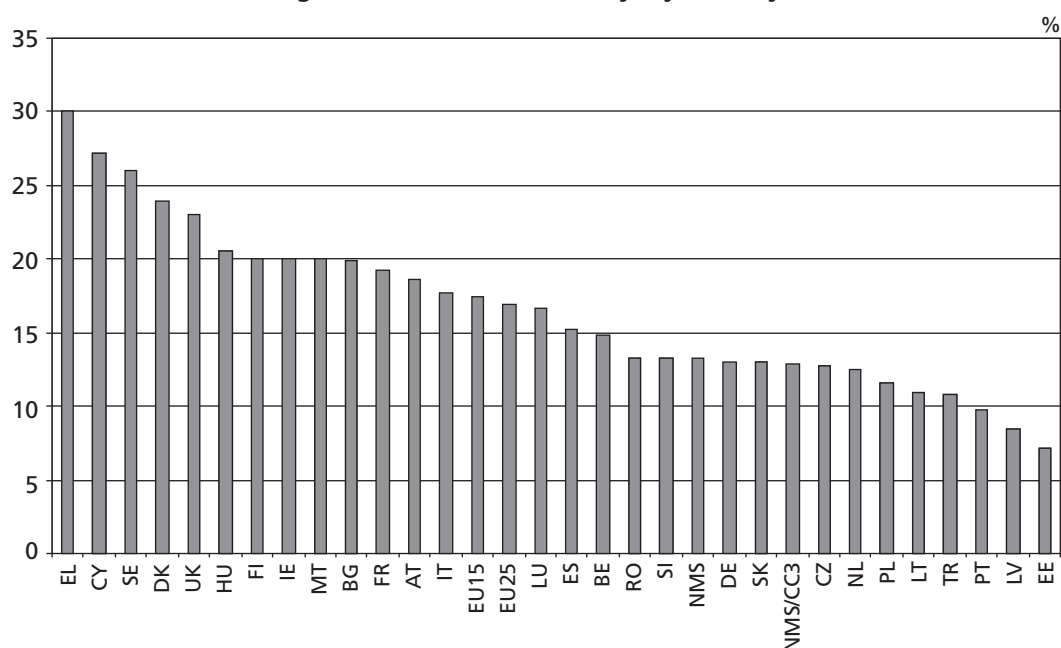
³² A reliability analysis of the index gave a satisfactory Cronbach alpha of 0.76.

Table 8 Working population with high levels of work intensity

	Lowest value	Highest value	Average value
EU15	10	30	18
New Member States (NMS)	7	27	13
EU25	7	30	17
Candidate countries (CC3)	11	20	12
NMS and CC3	7	27	13
Total	7	30	16

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The percentage for high work intensity varies widely among European countries: in Greece, the percentage for high work intensity is 30%, four times the level in Estonia (7%), and three times the level in Portugal (10%). Among the EU15 countries, Scandinavian countries, the UK and Ireland report high levels of work intensity. In the NMS, work intensity is significantly higher than the average in Cyprus, Malta and Hungary (see Figure 7).

Figure 7 Workers with high levels of work intensity, by country

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The Eurobarometer survey also examines work intensity according to specific social features, focusing first on education. According to its results, work intensity increases in parallel with rising levels of education. Just over one in 10 employees with lower secondary level education (13%) report stressful working conditions. This figure increases to one in five employees among respondents with third level education.

Perceived work intensity also varies according to occupational status, and is highest among farmers and self-employed people (approximately 25%). Managers and white-collar workers of higher occupational status experience similar levels of work intensity. The percentage of perceived work intensity is more moderate among skilled blue-collar workers, people working in routine non-

manual positions, and non-skilled blue-collar workers, at around 13%³³. Work intensity, however, does not correspond with sex and with age.

It is interesting to observe if there is any correlation between the ratio of those who perceive their work as intense and the length of time spent at work. While only 8% of part-time workers experience high work intensity, the percentage for full-time workers and those claiming overtime is 13% and 35%, respectively (see Table 9). The correlation between working hours and work intensity is considerably stronger in the EU15 countries – where 45% of those working over 48 hours feel overloaded – than in the NMS and candidate countries.

Table 9 Working hours and work intensity

	Percentage of workers with very high levels of work intensity
Part-time work	8
Reduced full-time work	11
Normal full-time work	13
Overtime	35

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

According to the EWCS, an average of around 60% of the working population in 27 countries (excluding Turkey) report working at least a quarter of the time, at very high speed and to tight deadlines. Moreover, an average of nearly 30% of employees work all the time under these conditions³⁴. These results indicate that the overall level of work intensity indicated in both surveys differs significantly. However, these differences are largely the result of different measurement methods. The Eurobarometer survey applies a very strict definition by rating work intensity according to five different dimensions, whereas the EWCS measures results according to two indicators. One significant variation worth mentioning is that the EWCS sees no difference in work intensity between EU15 and NMS/candidate countries, whereas the Eurobarometer survey concludes that conditions are significantly worse in the EU15.

Career opportunities within the workplace

Internal career opportunities are considered an important feature of working conditions, in relation to concepts focusing on human relations and company culture, as well as theoretical approaches regarding segmentation of the internal labour market. The Eurobarometer survey features one statement for that purpose: 'I am likely to get a better job in this organisation/company in the next three years'. The employee could choose the following responses: 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neither agree nor disagree', 'disagree', 'strongly disagree' or 'not applicable'. Those who strongly disagreed with this statement were classified as employees with reduced internal career opportunities³⁵.

³³ The possible effect of a high proportion of part-time workers in the same occupational classes will be discussed later.

³⁴ Two additional indicators of the EWCS are not explicitly considered: 'not having enough time to do the job' and the 'frequency and impact of interruptions'.

³⁵ Respondents who are uncertain and self-employed people who work alone have been excluded from this analysis.

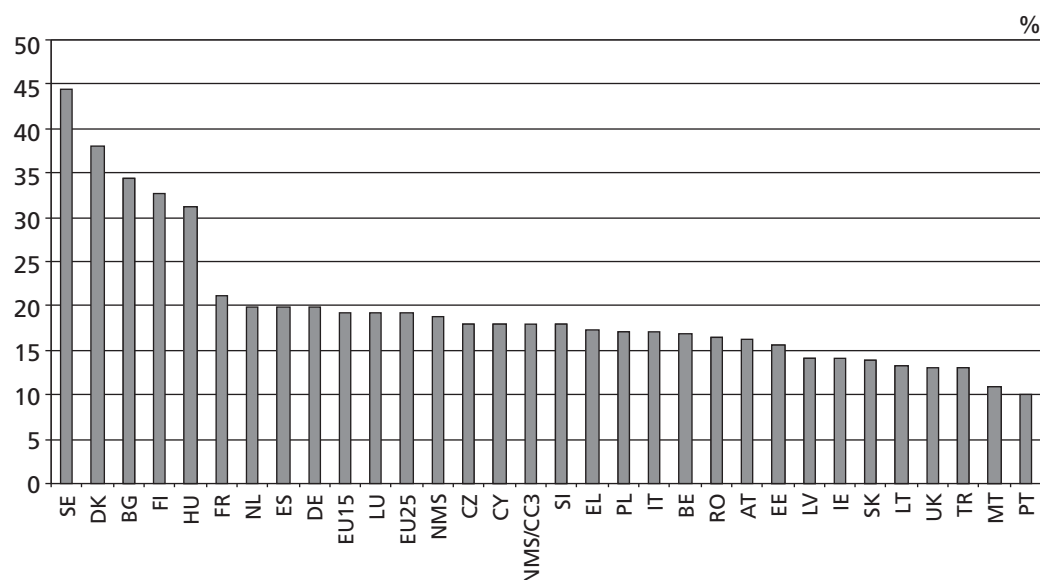
Table 10 Workers with reduced internal career opportunities

	Lowest value %	Highest value %	Average value %
EU15	10	45	19
New Member States (NMS)	13	31	19
EU25	10	45	19
Candidate countries (CC3)	17	34	17
NMS and CC3	13	45	18
Total	10	45	19

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

According to the results, almost one fifth of respondents with valid answers (19%) have reduced internal career opportunities. In terms of promotion within the workplace, career opportunities are very different throughout Europe, compared with other dimensions of working conditions. A small and mixed group of countries (including EU15, NMS and candidate countries) report very high percentages of workers with reduced career opportunities (between 30%–45%). It is interesting that the three Nordic countries – Sweden, Denmark and Finland – are represented in this group. This contrasts with the remaining countries, which show reduced career opportunities of between 10% and 20% (see Figure 8).

Based on the distribution of career opportunities at country level, the results show a very even picture between the various country groupings (see Table 10).

Figure 8 Workers with poor career opportunities in workplace, by country


Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The Eurobarometer survey also examines the development of career opportunities according to specific social features. Evidently, sex and level of education have no significant influence on perceived internal career opportunities. Among all the variables that were considered, the age of

the respondent is most significant in relation to career opportunities. Understandably, the youngest respondents were most optimistic about the idea of internal promotion: only 13% reported that they saw no further opportunities for promotion within the organisation. The percentage of respondents who see no opportunities slightly increases in the 25–39 year old age group (16%), and is significantly higher in the oldest age group (28%)³⁶.

Summary

Overall, the description and brief analysis of quality of working conditions, based on Eurobarometer data from the 28 European countries, reveals no major surprises. The survey's main results concur with common theoretical assumptions in relation to cultural differences between countries and the effect of social stratification. It also correlates with empirical results of other comparative studies in an enlarged Europe, in particular, with the conclusions of the Foundation's Third European Working Conditions Survey. In this respect, the analysis provides a sound and reliable basis for the main undertaking of this study, which is to explore the dynamic interrelationship between quality of work and various aspects of quality of life.

However, there are two significant differences between the results of both surveys. Compared with the EWCS, the Eurobarometer results emphasise stronger differences between the NMS and EU15 countries, regarding certain aspects of working conditions. Secondly, the EWCS indicates a higher level of demanding working conditions and higher levels of risk exposure for employees overall in Europe than the Eurobarometer. It is, however, difficult to attribute and assess properly the differences between the two surveys. As outlined at the beginning of the chapter, the variation in results may depend as much on methodological differences between the two surveys, as on differences in actual results.

³⁶ This aspect was not included in the EWCS.

Dynamics between quality of work and social relations

Introduction

In general, quality of life and the individual welfare of citizens are influenced by resources and conditions at work and in the private sphere. The following chapters will focus on the dynamic relationship between quality of working conditions and specific aspects of quality of life in the private domain of citizens. What is the association between working conditions and quality of life? Do detrimental working conditions translate into reduced quality of life in the private domain? Can high quality of private life compensate for poor working conditions? Or, are both domains completely independent?

Two specific aspects of living conditions have been chosen for this analysis: namely, social relations with friends and family, and perceived general life satisfaction. This chapter deals with the first dimension. It begins with an analysis of the perceived effect of work on the respondent's social relations. It examines, first of all, the apparent consequences of demanding working conditions on employees' quality of social life. This is followed by an examination of the statistical association between the quality of working conditions and quality of social relationships. To what extent is the relationship, perceived by the respondents, confirmed by the statistical analysis? Finally, the chapter focuses on satisfaction with family and social life of the working population in Europe. Have demanding working conditions a detrimental effect on satisfaction with social life, or are they mutually independent?

In relation to methods used in the analysis, two approaches are applied. It starts with a bivariate analysis, which is then followed by the use of multivariate regression techniques.

Perceived effects of work on social relations

Initially, the analysis looks at the perceived effects of work on the respondent's social relations, by measuring the self-reported effects on the respondent's relationship with family and friends. A complex index was developed for this purpose, which addresses various dimensions of the impact of work on family life, as well as on wider social relations. The index includes the following questions:

- Do you find that your job prevents you from giving the time you want to your partner or family?
- Do you feel too tired after work to enjoy the things you would like to do at home?
- Do you feel too tired after work to go out with friends?
- Do you find that your partner/family gets fed up with the pressures of your job?

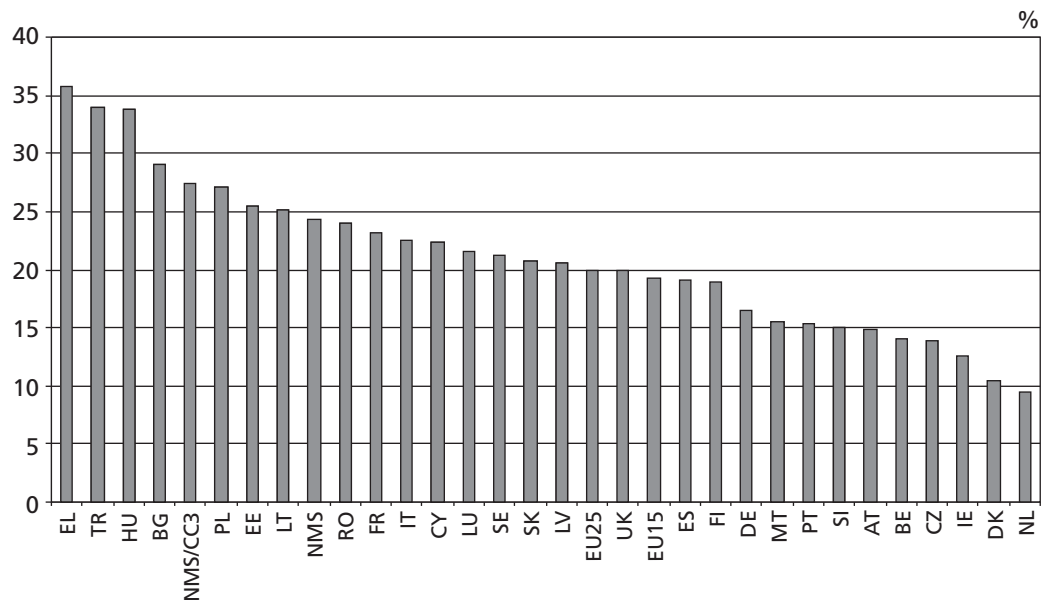
For each question, the respondent had five answer options: 'always', 'often', 'sometimes', 'rarely' and 'never'. The consequences of excess work are considered negative where respondents chose 'always' at least once for the four statements, or where respondents gave 'often' answers at least twice. By this definition, 21% of respondents report negative consequences on their social life due to work commitments.

Within this group, there is an uneven distribution in relation to individual countries and social strata. An average of 24% of employees in the NMS and 27% of employees in candidate countries

report negative consequences, compared with an average of 19% in the EU15 (see Figure 9). This seems to indicate either a higher degree of demanding working conditions outside the EU15, or else a higher level of aspiration towards the quality of social relations. The second hypothesis is confirmed by a report by Delhey (2004, p. 12), which reveals that employees in the NMS and CC3 place a higher importance on social relations as a necessity for a better quality of life.

Taking a closer look at the 28 countries, the highest level of troubled social relationships arising from excess work is recorded in Greece (over 35%), while the lowest level is reported in the Netherlands and Denmark (about 10%). Hungarian and Turkish employees also report high degrees of social disturbance due to demanding working conditions.

Figure 9 Troubled family/friendship relations, by country



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Not surprisingly, when analysing the possible association between occupation and troubled social relations arising from difficult working conditions, farmers and self-employed people report troubled relations higher than the average. Other socio-structural variables – such as sex, age and level of education – seem to have no, or only a marginal, effect on troubled family and friendship relations.

Overall, a significant minority of employees perceive difficult working conditions as having a detrimental effect on their social life. This confirms mainstream evidence in Europe, which shows that over one third of the population in some European countries agree that working conditions can have a negative effect on social relations. Moreover, the negative effects of work are thought to have potential consequences in relation to important family functions, such as childcare, care of the elderly and possibly even fertility. As far as wider social relations are concerned, demanding working conditions may reduce social integration and the availability of social capital for a minority of employees.

Association between quality of work and social relations

This section questions the extent to which the perceived relationship between negative working conditions and quality of social relations is confirmed by statistical analysis. Here, a regression approach is used and the focus is on the inferred determinants of the perceived quality of social relations. Questions asked include:

- What is the link between work intensity, working hours, physical and psychological working conditions, work autonomy, career opportunities and unemployment experience, and the quality of social relations?
- Which group of employees experiences the strongest and weakest effects of difficult working conditions?

Evidently, the correlation between social relations and work intensity and working hours is strong. According to the respondents' evaluation, high work intensity has adverse consequences for family and friendship relations (see Table 11). Nearly half of employees with high work intensity report troubled family and friendship relationships, whereas employees with 'normal' work intensity are much more satisfied with their social life.

Table 11 Troubled family/friendship relations and work intensity

Work intensity	Percentage of respondents with troubled family/friendship relationship
Satisfactory	16
Too intensive	49
All respondents	21

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The number of working hours has a similar impact. Employees who work more than 48 hours per week report significantly higher negative impacts on family and friendship relations, than employees with normal working hours (see Table 12). Just over one in 10 of respondents in this group report problems with their social life. At first glance, these results support EU policies that aim to reduce standard working time to 48 hours per week. They also support the idea that part-time work and reduced working hours have clear, 'risk reducing' benefits in relation to quality of social life, and that working time policies that aim for increased availability of voluntary, part-time work are worthwhile.

Table 12 Troubled family/friendship relations, by working hours

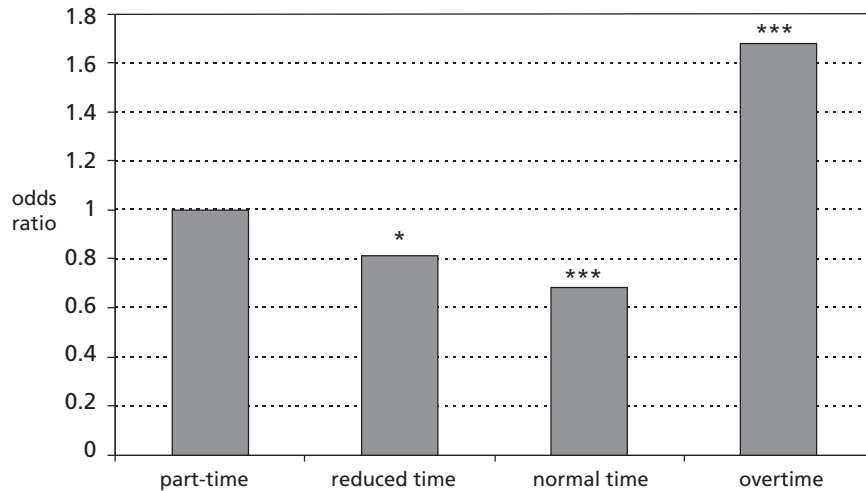
Working hours	Percentage of respondents with troubled family/friendship relationship
Part-time worker	13
Works reduced time	13
Full-time worker	19
Over 48 hours work per week	36
All respondents	21

Source: CC EB, 2002; EB-56.1, 2001

What is the combined effect of work intensity and working hours? These factors are not easily separated – for example, a large percentage of those working long hours also experience high work

intensity, and vice versa. To separate the impacts of each factor, a complex statistical model has been developed.

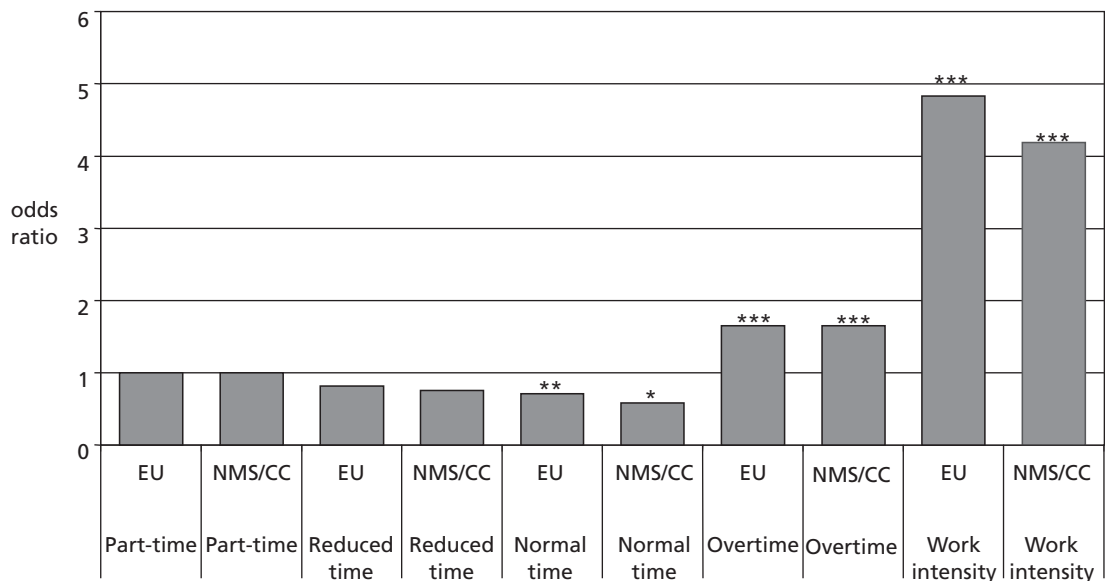
Figure 10 Troubled family/friendship relationship and working hours (odds ratio)



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

According to the results obtained from the logistic regression model, excessive work intensity has the greatest negative impact on the quality of social life. If the effects of work intensity are eliminated, the risk of a negative impact on social relations remained greater in the case of working hours over 48 hours per week. However, the impact of work intensity is considerably greater than that of longer working hours. In addition, it can also be claimed that workers in the NMS and candidate countries are characterised by greater risk, even after eliminating the effects of other influencing factors (see Figures 10 and 11).

Figure 11 Troubled family/friendship relationship and working conditions, by country group (odds ratio)



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

Unfavourable physical and psychological working conditions are also associated with a higher probability of problematic social relations. Negative physical conditions are more commonly associated than intensive workloads are with difficulties arising in connection with family or friends. In fact, the problem is quite significant: employees who work under unfavourable physical working conditions experience troubles in their family/friendship relations almost four times more frequently than those who work under satisfactory physical conditions. Unfortunately, the actual causes of unfavourable physical working conditions cannot be identified in greater detail here (see Table 13).

Table 13 Respondents with troubled family/friendship relations due to work, by physical working conditions

Physical working conditions	Percentage of respondents with troubled family/friendship relationship
Satisfactory	15
Unfavourable	54
All respondents	21

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The association between psychological working conditions and problematic social relations is even more pronounced. This is not surprising, considering that the complex indicator used to measure psychological working conditions includes two questions which refer to the perceived effects of psychological working conditions in the home. A person who comes home from work exhausted and who finds it difficult to unwind at the end of the working day will, for example, have a higher propensity to report troubled social relationships. Therefore, it is not surprising that over 60% of employees with demanding psychological working conditions report problems with family and friends (see Table 14).

Table 14 Respondents experiencing troubled family/friendship relations due to work, by psychological working conditions

Psychological working conditions	Percentage of respondents experiencing troubled family/friendship relationship
Satisfactory	12
Unfavourable	62
All respondents	21

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Turning to another dimension of working conditions – work autonomy – it is evident that those who experience a low level of work autonomy do not have significantly more troubled social relationships, compared with those who experience high work autonomy.

Surprisingly, the experience of serious, long-term unemployment in the last five years is not associated with a considerably higher percentage of problematic social relations due to work. However, one third of employees with serious unemployment experience do report problems in their social relationships (see Table 14).

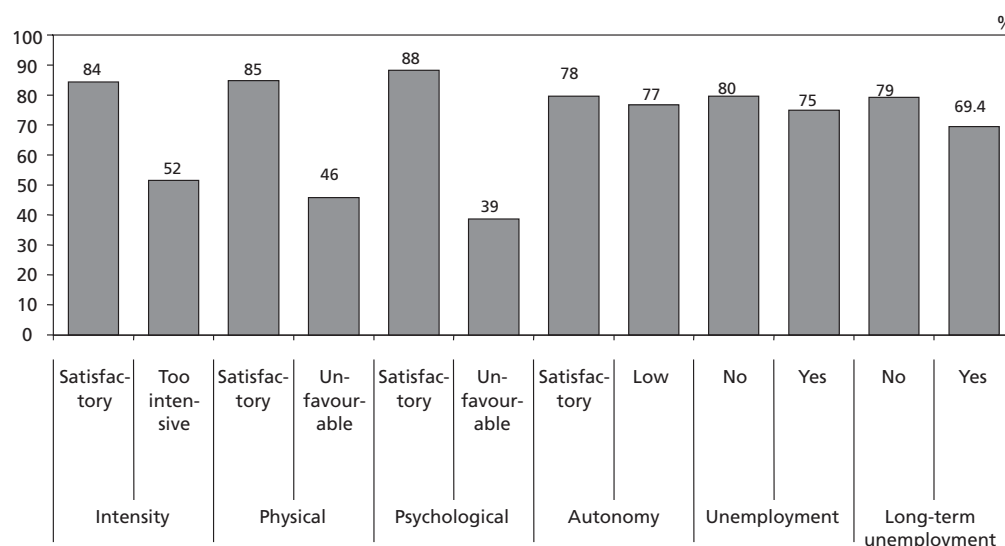
Table 15 Respondents with troubled family/friendship relations due to work, by severe unemployment experience

Experiencing severe unemployment	Percentage of respondents with troubled family/friendship relationship
No	21
Yes	31
All respondents	21

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

In summary, psychological and physical working conditions, as well as work intensity, have the strongest influence on the quality of social relations. Between 50% and 60% of employees who experience any one of these three factors report a negative effect on social relations. Persistent longer working hours and severe unemployment experience have a significantly lower impact and are reported by 30% to 35% of respondents. Lack of autonomy and general employment experience are perceived by about a quarter of respondents as being detrimental (see Figure 12). Thus, traditional work issues maintain a similar importance as issues concerning a more favourable work–life balance, in relation to the perceived quality of social relations. The equal importance of both of these aspects is not often reflected in the public debate between social partners and governments, which is currently dominated by issues related to the work–life balance agenda.

Figure 12 No trouble in families or in friendship relations, by dimensions of working conditions



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Quality of work and satisfaction with family life

The previous section examined the negative impacts of several dimensions of working conditions on family and other social relations. This section goes a step further by looking at their effects on perceived satisfaction with family life. A rational model of human behaviour would assume a direct link between demanding working conditions, problematic social and family relations, and reduced

satisfaction with family and social life. This section looks, in particular, at the perceived satisfaction with family life.

Once again, the analysis begins by exploring the association between work intensity and, in this instance, satisfaction with family life. According to the survey results, intensive work only has a mild effect on dissatisfaction with family life. Among people with high work intensity, the proportion of employees who are not satisfied with family life is 14% and is not much higher than the figure for employees working under normal working conditions, which is 9% (see Table 16).

Table 16 Satisfaction with family life, by work intensity

Satisfaction with family life (%)					
Work intensity	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
Not too intensive	1	8	51	41	99
Too intensive	3	11	44	42	100
All respondents	2	8	50	41	101

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The correlation between working hours and satisfaction with family life is similar. The proportion of those who are very satisfied with their family life reduces as the number of working hours increases. While 47% of part-time workers are very satisfied with family life, this ratio is only 36% among people working over 48 hours a week (see Table 17).

Table 17 Satisfaction with family life, by working hours per week

Satisfaction with family life (%)					
Working hours	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
Part-time	1	6	46	47	100
Reduced time	1	7	51	41	100
Full-time	2	8	49	42	101
Over 48 hours work	2	10	53	36	101
All respondents	1.6	8.0	49.5	40.9	100

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Dissatisfaction with family life is also slightly higher among workers experiencing unfavourable psychological conditions in their workplace (15%), compared with levels of dissatisfaction among those who experience favourable psychological conditions (8%). Overall, the potential impact that unfavourable psychological working conditions can have on family life satisfaction is lower than the apparent impact that negative working conditions in general have on both family and friendship relations (see Table 18).

Table 18 Satisfaction with family life, by psychological working conditions

Satisfaction with family life (%)					
Psychological working conditions	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
Satisfactory	1	7	50	42	100
Unfavourable	3	12	48	37	100
All respondents	2	8	50	41	101

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The relationship between satisfaction with family life and the nature of physical working conditions is similar to that for psychological working conditions. Accordingly, the proportion of employees who are dissatisfied with family life is higher (14%) among those who work under unfavourable physical working conditions, compared with workers who enjoy satisfactory physical conditions in their workplace (9%) – see Table 19.

Table 19 Satisfaction with family life, by physical working conditions

Satisfaction with family life (%)					
Psychological working conditions	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
Satisfactory	1	8	50	42	101
Unfavourable	3	11	50	36	100
All respondents	2	8	50	41	101

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The link between lack of autonomy in work and family-life satisfaction is even more moderate, as the proportion of dissatisfied employees in this category shows an increased ratio of only four percentage points.

Among those who have not experienced unemployment, the proportion of those dissatisfied with family life is 9%. However, 18% of respondents who experienced unemployment are dissatisfied with their family life (see Table 20).

Table 20 Satisfaction with family life, by unemployment experience

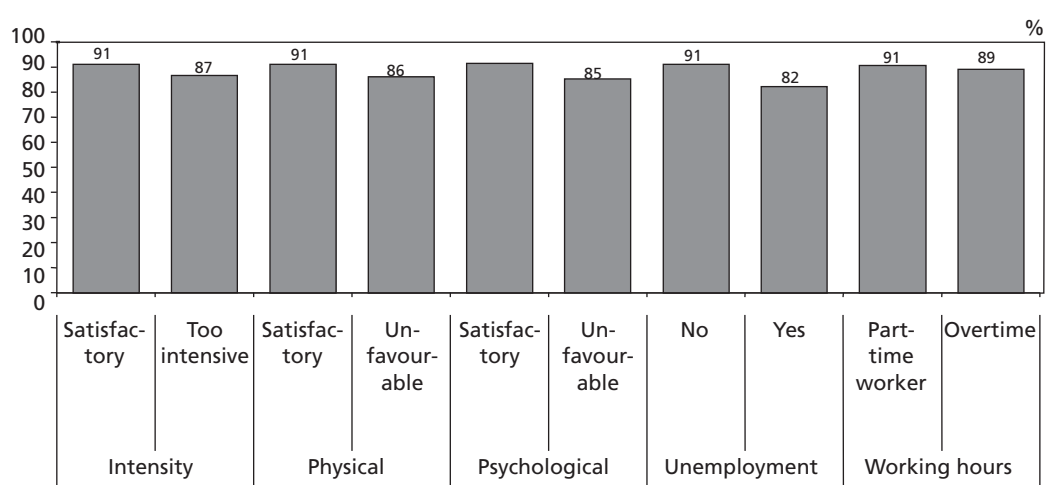
Satisfaction with family life (%)					
Unemployment experience	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
No	2	7	51	41	100
Yes	4	14	50	33	101
All respondents	2	8	50	41	101

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Altogether, there is little variation in the association between different aspects of working conditions and satisfaction with family life. Overall, unemployment experience seems to be more important in determining satisfaction with family life than any other dimension of working

conditions (see Figure 13). This finding confirms long-standing results of unemployment research, which highlight the negative effects of unemployment on the quality of family life. It is interesting, however, that based on a statistical interference analysis, all major working conditions indicators show only a low level of association with family life satisfaction. On the other hand, there seems to be a much stronger correlation between the same indicators and the perceived quality of social relations due to detrimental working conditions. In other words, perceived negative effects related to work do not automatically translate into reduced levels of satisfaction. This would imply that, among the range of factors that influence satisfaction with family life, working conditions are of minor importance.

Figure 13 Proportion satisfied with their family life, by dimensions of working conditions



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Satisfaction with social life

The final section of this chapter looks at the influence of working conditions on satisfaction with social life. Based on previous results, one could expect that high work intensity may have a possible detrimental influence on the level of contentment with social life. This hypothesis, however, is not strongly confirmed by the data. Among workers with a high work intensity, 24% reported that they were dissatisfied with their social life, compared with 15% of workers who experienced a reasonable workload (see Table 21). The percentage of employees who were very satisfied with their social life, however, shows no variation according to the degree of work intensity.

Results obtained in relation to work intensity are also reflected in the association between satisfaction with social life and the respondent's weekly working hours. As weekly working hours increase, the percentage of those not satisfied with their social life grows from 14% to 22%, while the percentage of those very satisfied falls from 30% to 22% (see Table 22). Once again, the data show only a weak association.

Table 21 Satisfaction with social life, by work intensity

Satisfaction with social life (%)					
Work intensity	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
Not too intensive	3	13	59	26	101
Too intensive	5	19	52	24	100
All respondents	3	14	58	26	101

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Table 22 Satisfaction with social life, by working hours per week

Satisfaction with social life (%)					
Working hours	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
Part-time worker	3	11	57	30	101
Works reduced time	2	13	57	28	100
Full-time worker	3	13	59	26	101
Over 48 hours work	4	18	56	22	100
All respondents	3	13	58	26	100

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Conversely, basic factors like physical and psychological working conditions show a stronger association with social life satisfaction. Nearly 30% of workers experiencing unfavourable psychological working conditions in their workplace are dissatisfied, compared with 14% of employees whose working conditions are satisfactory (see Table 23). At the same time, the number of respondents who are very satisfied with their social life is reduced from 27% to 19%.

Table 23 Satisfaction with social life, by psychological working conditions

Satisfaction with family life (%)					
Psychological conditions	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
Satisfactory	2	12	59	27	100
Unfavourable	7	22	52	19	100
All respondents	3	14	58	26	101

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

As Table 24 demonstrates, the association between physical working conditions and dissatisfaction with social life is similar to that for psychological working conditions. The results seem to indicate a direct link between physical fatigue and psychological burden due to work and the cognitive dimension of social life for certain groups of employees.

How does lack of autonomy at work – a factor that did not play an important role in satisfaction with family life – influence satisfaction with social life? Overall, it holds a similar importance as work intensity and duration of weekly working time. Having more autonomous work is associated with a 15% level of dissatisfaction, compared with 22% among those who lack work autonomy (see Table 25).

Table 24 Satisfaction with social life, by physical working conditions

Satisfaction with family life (%)					
Physical working conditions	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
Satisfactory	2	12	59	27	100
Unfavourable	8	23	51	19	100
All respondents	3	14	58	26	100

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Table 25 Satisfaction with social life, by work autonomy

Satisfaction with family life (%)					
Autonomy	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
Satisfactory	3	13	58	27	101
Low	5	17	58	20	100
All respondents	3	13	58	26	100

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Does uncertainty regarding job security and experience of long-term unemployment affect social life? Not surprisingly, the association between dissatisfaction with social life and working conditions is strongest in relation to severe unemployment. Some 40% of respondents who have experienced long-term unemployment are dissatisfied with their social life, compared with under 20% of the control group (see Table 26). This significant decrease in satisfaction can be explained, firstly, by a lack of monetary resources due to long-term unemployment, which in turn limits the opportunities for socialising. Moreover, unemployment may lead to a loss of social contacts, directly or indirectly related to work. For men, in particular, social contacts at work play a major role in their overall social network.

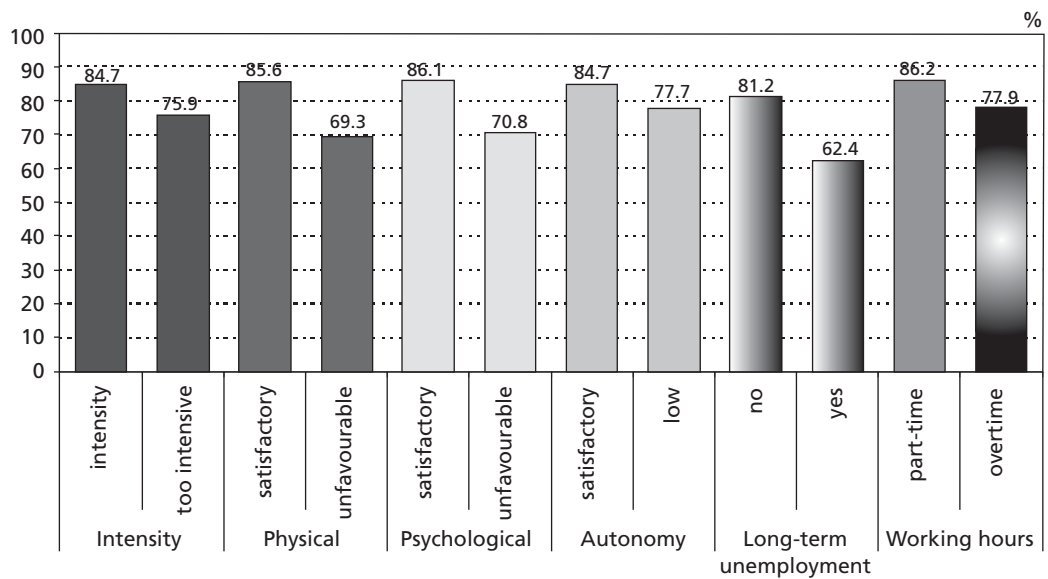
Table 26 Satisfaction with social life, by long-term unemployment experience

Satisfaction with family life (%)					
Having severe unemployment experience	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
No	4	15	57	24	100.0
Yes	11	27	47	16	101.0
All respondents	4	16	56	24	100.0

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Figure 14 summarises the main findings of this section, in relation to the association between social life and working conditions. Overall, respondents are very content with their social life and demonstrate a satisfaction level of 80%. Intensity of work, weekly working time and level of autonomy do not exert a strong influence on satisfaction levels, according to results based on a bivariate analysis. More significant are the effects of unfavourable psychological and physical working conditions. The strongest association, by far, exists between experiences of long-term unemployment in the last five years and diminishing satisfaction levels.

Figure 14 Proportion satisfied with their social life, by dimensions of working conditions



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

In conclusion, the results of this chapter confirm the findings of a substantial amount of research in relation to the detrimental social effects of unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment. In this respect, having 'bad' work is perceived by respondents as being less detrimental to their social life, than having no work at all over an extended period of time.

Introduction

The previous chapter examined the relationship between various dimensions of quality of work and general life satisfaction. Measuring satisfaction, particularly overall life satisfaction, is regarded as the best available indicator of the quality of life of citizens in Europe. This means that quality of life cannot be comprehensively described by objective living conditions alone. Subjective assessments of life circumstances in terms of ‘good’ and ‘bad’, ‘dissatisfied’ and ‘satisfied’, ‘happy’ and ‘unhappy’, are also necessary in order to get a complete picture of people’s well-being.

Subjective experiences are usually measured in terms of: satisfaction, happiness, and unpleasant feelings like stress or worry. In this chapter, the report focuses only on the subjective experience of satisfaction, by taking a cognitive driven evaluation of living conditions and quality of life³⁷.

Work intensity

Does high work intensity have a significant negative impact on general life satisfaction, or is this key dimension of subjective quality of life unrelated to adverse working conditions? Looking at Table 27, the results for all respondents are slightly contradictory. Intensity of work has no influence on both extreme groups – those who are either very satisfied or not satisfied at all with their lives. It has only a minor impact on respondents in the two middle categories. Overall, the effect of work intensity is therefore not statistically significant.

Table 27 Life satisfaction and work intensity

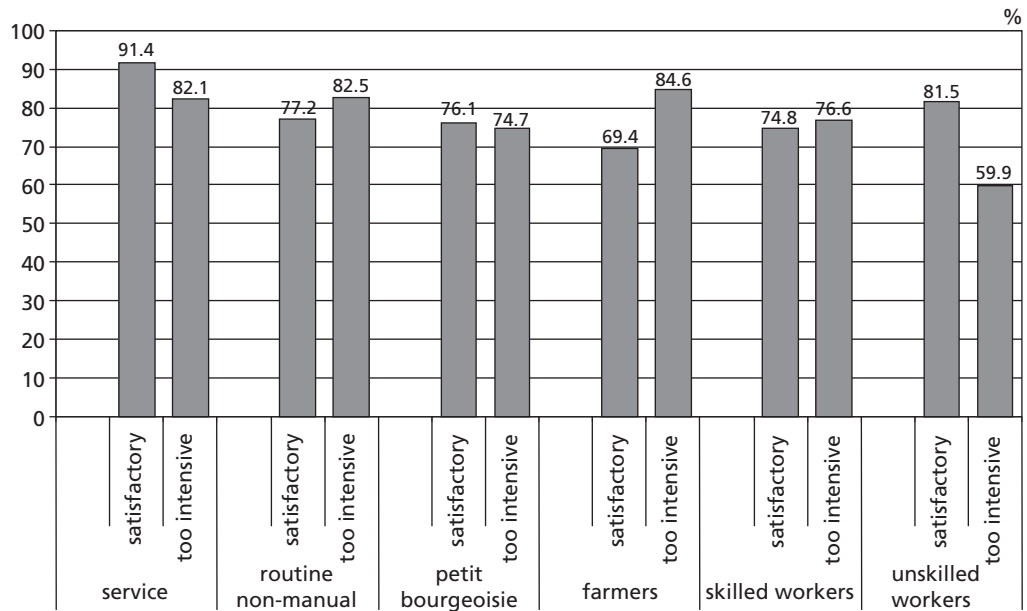
Work intensity	Life satisfaction (%)				All
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	
Not too intensive	3	13	62	23	101.0
Too intensive	3	18	54	25	100.0
All respondents	3	14	61	24	101.0

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

However, if explored from the perspective of occupational class, the picture is more complex. In the two groups that show a high rate of work autonomy, i.e. farmers and self-employed people, excessive work intensity even reduces (for farmers) or does not increase considerably (for self-employed people) the risk of diminishing general life satisfaction. In relation to employees who are more likely to experience pressure as a result of excessive workloads, the correlation between dissatisfaction and excessive workload is considerably stronger. The strongest relationship can be observed among the least autonomous group, i.e. non-skilled manual workers. In this group, 40% of workers experiencing high work intensity are dissatisfied with life (see Figure 15).

³⁷ For more detail, see Delhey (2004, pp. 1–2).

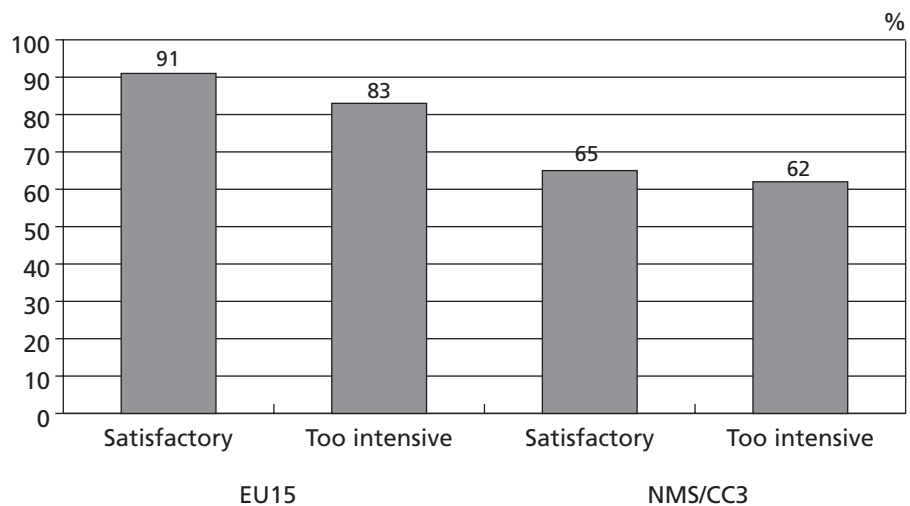
Figure 15 Life satisfaction and work intensity, by occupational class



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The relationship between life satisfaction and work intensity is stronger in the EU15 countries than in the combined NMS and candidate countries. In the latter group, there is virtually no association with work intensity, whereas in the EU15 countries, there is a 10% difference in relation to positive life experience between employees with reasonable work intensity and employees with excessive work intensity (see Figure 16).

Figure 16 Life satisfaction and work intensity, by country group



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

In relation to gender, work intensity has a slightly higher impact for women than for men. It is interesting that, for men with high general life satisfaction, work intensity has a small positive

relationship. In other words, men with excessive work intensity are, to a greater degree, very satisfied with their life compared to men with an average work intensity.

Physical and psychological working conditions

The indices for physical and psychological working conditions show a similar result when compared with general life satisfaction (see Tables 28 and 29). According to the survey results, there is a considerably stronger association between general life satisfaction and physical and psychological working conditions than with work intensity.

Some one third of employees in Europe who are working under demanding physical working conditions are dissatisfied with life, compared with just over 10% of employees working under satisfactory physical conditions. It seems apparent that, in modern knowledge-based societies, a high physical workload is regarded as less acceptable than in industrial societies. In a knowledge-based society, high physical workloads can be avoided in many circumstances, once available technologies and appropriate forms of work organisation are applied. Under these conditions, very demanding physical working conditions are perceived by employees as being unnecessary and as a deviation from the norm. Employees who experience demanding physical working conditions feel relatively and objectively deprived; as a result, their general life satisfaction is reduced.

Table 28 Life satisfaction and physical working conditions

Physical working conditions	Life satisfaction (%)				All
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	
Satisfactory	2	11	62	25	100
Unfavourable	6	26	54	15	101
All respondents	3	26	61	24	101

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The overall effects of psychological working conditions are nearly equal to that of physical working conditions in relation to life satisfaction. Some 70% of people working under demanding psychological conditions are satisfied with their life. This figure rises to 87% among people working under satisfactory psychological conditions. These results indicate that unfavourable psychological working conditions are increasingly perceived by employees as being conducive to a reduced subjective well-being, particularly in their psychological health.

In relation to occupational status, the results for farmers are particularly interesting. The correlation between demanding physical working conditions and diminishing general life satisfaction is strongest among farmers: 52% of those experiencing unfavourable physical working conditions report that they are not satisfied. Some 23% of farmers working under satisfactory physical working conditions are dissatisfied. A possible explanation for this is that farmers feel relatively disadvantaged in comparison with employees in other sectors, where overall improvements have made work and life in general easier. Conversely, the relationship between life satisfaction and psychological working conditions is weakest among farmers, i.e. they show the least negative effect in relation to subjective life satisfaction. Demanding psychological conditions seem to be an accepted part of the job for farmers around Europe.

In relation to gender, there is no significant association, in this regard, between physical and psychological working conditions and general life satisfaction.

Table 29 Life satisfaction and psychological working conditions

Psychological working conditions	Life satisfaction (%)				All
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	
Satisfactory	2	11	62	25	100
Unfavourable	5	24	54	16	99
All respondents	3	13	61	24	101

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Work autonomy

Many people regard autonomy at work as being an important facet of their quality of life. Therefore, it is worthwhile exploring how various degrees of work autonomy interrelate with general life satisfaction. Overall, employees in the 28 countries surveyed who experience low levels of work autonomy are less satisfied with their life, compared with employees with a high level of work autonomy. However, while the difference of 13% is significant, it does not represent a very strong association (see Table 30).

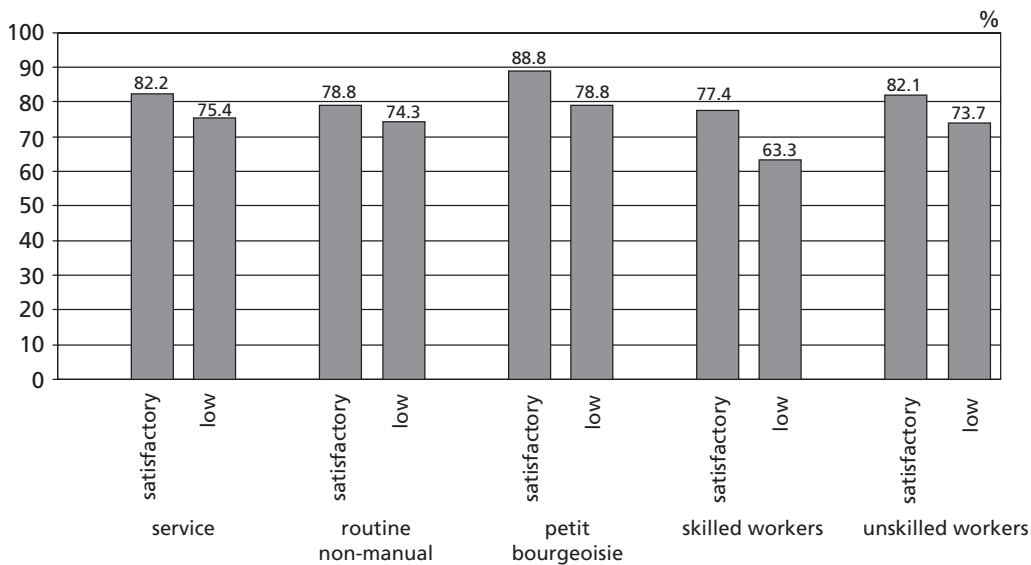
Table 30 Life satisfaction and work autonomy

Autonomy at work	Life satisfaction (%)				All
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	
Satisfactory	2	12	61	25	100
Low	5	22	57	16	100
All respondents	3	13	61	23	100

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

One would expect that occupational class should have a significant influence on the association between life satisfaction and work autonomy. The data confirm the expectation that skilled blue-collar workers, in particular, and white-collar workers of higher occupational status are sensitive to low levels of work autonomy. Empirically, skilled blue-collar workers, who experience good levels of work autonomy, are nearly 20% more satisfied with life than those who experience lower levels of autonomy. Despite this difference, nearly two thirds of skilled manual workers with low levels of work autonomy are satisfied with their life. In relation to farmers and self-employed people, low degrees of work autonomy do not impact on their life satisfaction (see Figure 17).

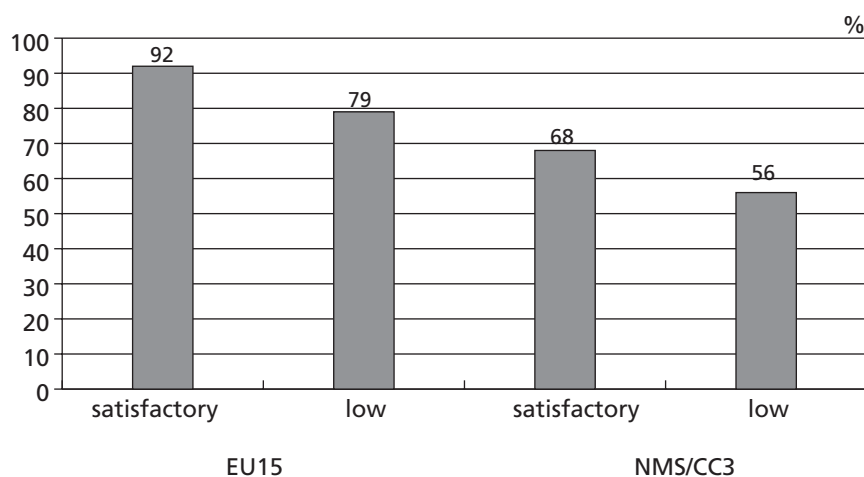
Figure 17 Life satisfaction and autonomy at work, by occupational class



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

One may wonder if the importance of work autonomy is greater in the EU15 countries than in the NMS. Judging by public discourses in the 1960s and 70s, the value of autonomy in general, particularly work autonomy, seems to play a much stronger role in most of the EU15, compared with the NMS. Surprisingly, the data show no differences as far as the effects of work autonomy on general life satisfaction are concerned (see Figure 18).

Figure 18 Life satisfaction and autonomy at work, by country group



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Lastly, data confirm that men and women assign a similar importance to relative autonomy, in the context of their overall life satisfaction.

Internal career opportunities

Perceived internal career opportunities of employees and their general life satisfaction are statistically not related to each other. On the one hand, it has been observed that more employees with poor career chances experience strong life satisfaction than employees with normal career opportunities. Conversely, in relation to employees who are reasonably satisfied with their lives, there is an inverse relationship (see Table 30).

Table 31 Life satisfaction and internal career opportunities

Internal career opportunities	Life satisfaction (%)				All
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	
Normal	2	12	62	23	100
Poor	4	15	51	29	100
All respondents	2	13	60	25	100

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Such contradictions in relation to the association between life satisfaction and career opportunities can be found in all occupational classes, among both men and women, and among old and new Member States in the EU.

Unemployment experience

Paid employment is regarded as a key component of everyday life in market economies. Many sociologists view work as an anchor point in life, during the middle phase of a normal three-phase life course. The impact of involuntary unemployment is experienced by many, not only through a serious reduction in financial resources, but also through a reduction in social contacts and in psychological well-being. One would expect, therefore, that unemployment experience and, particularly long-term unemployment, would have a significant negative effect on general life satisfaction.

Table 32 Life satisfaction and unemployment experience

Unemployment experience	Life satisfaction (%)				All
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	
No	3	13	60	24	100
Yes	11	28	48	13	100
All respondents	5	16	58	22	100

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

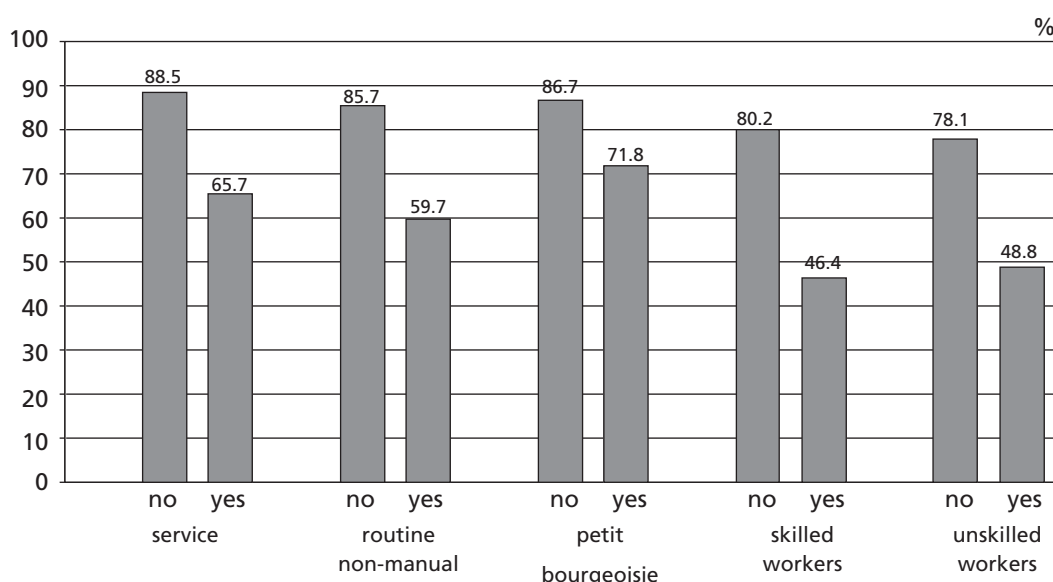
This is confirmed by the results of this study. Just over 60% of unemployed people are satisfied with their life, compared with 84% of employed people. Possibly the most interesting result is that, despite being unemployed, over 10% are very satisfied and nearly half of unemployed people are reasonably satisfied with their life. This is a clear indication that social security measures have had a significant effect in easing the negative effects of unemployment in developed market economies (see Table 32).

Table 33 Life satisfaction and long-term unemployment experience

Life satisfaction (%)					
Severe unemployment experience	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	All
No	4	15	59	22	100
Yes	16	31	41	12	100
All respondents	5	16	58	22	101

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

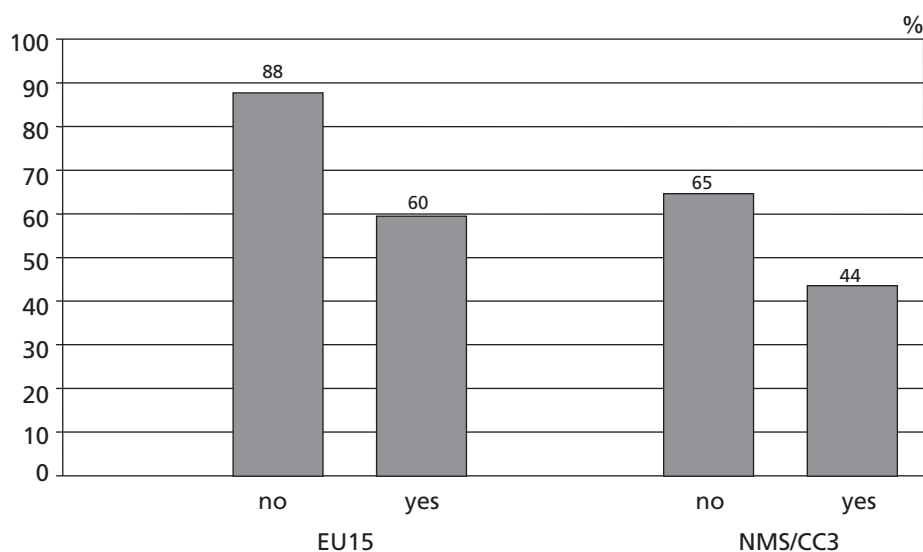
Understandably, long-term unemployment has a stronger impact on life satisfaction. In this category, there is an increase of almost 30 percentage points in terms of reduced life satisfaction (see Table 33). However, compared with the overall effects of unemployment, this increase is not very substantial.

Figure 19 Life satisfaction and unemployment, by occupational class

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Distinguishing respondents according to occupational class should reveal a different level of association between unemployment and long-term unemployment experience and general life satisfaction. The results confirm that there is still a significant difference between white- and blue-collar workers, in terms of their perception of and reaction to unemployment experience. Accordingly, unemployment experience reduces life satisfaction of skilled blue-collar workers by 29 percentage points, while long-term unemployment experience reduces their life satisfaction by 33 percentage points. Only 12% of long-term unemployed skilled blue-collar workers are very satisfied with their life. In comparison, 19% of routine non-manual workers with unemployment experience report diminishing life satisfaction, while 26% of those with long-term unemployment experience report reduced life satisfaction.

Figure 20 Life satisfaction and unemployment, by country group



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

The relationship between unemployment experience and perceived poor quality of life proves to be similar in the EU15 countries, and in the NMS and candidate countries (see Figure 20). In relation to long-term employment, however, differences emerge between the country groupings. In the EU15, for example, the number of 'very satisfied' people drops from 28% to 15% with unemployment experience of two years or more, whereas high satisfaction levels remain stable in the NMS and CC3.

A comparison of figures for females and males also reveals certain differences. The relationship between unemployment experience and life satisfaction is stronger for males than for females, although only in relation to long-term unemployment mainly.

Overall, unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment, has a serious effect on the subjective quality of life of people in Europe.

Working hours

Post-war Europe has witnessed many industrial disputes in relation to the issue of reduced working time. Besides economic considerations, trade unions argued in favour of reduced working time because of its potential benefits for employees' quality of life. A recent example of this was the campaign by French trade unions to lobby for a 35-hour working week.

Based on these discourses, one would expect there to be a strong relationship between the number of working hours and the perceived quality of life, as well as life satisfaction. However, this is not the case, as this study observes that reduced working time only has a minor impact on overall life satisfaction. Nearly 90% of part-time workers are reasonably or very satisfied with their life; this compares with about 80% of employees who regularly work more than 48 hours per week. Moreover, there is only an eight percentage point difference in satisfaction levels between employees who regularly work excessive hours and employees working normal full-time hours.

Table 34 Life satisfaction and working hours

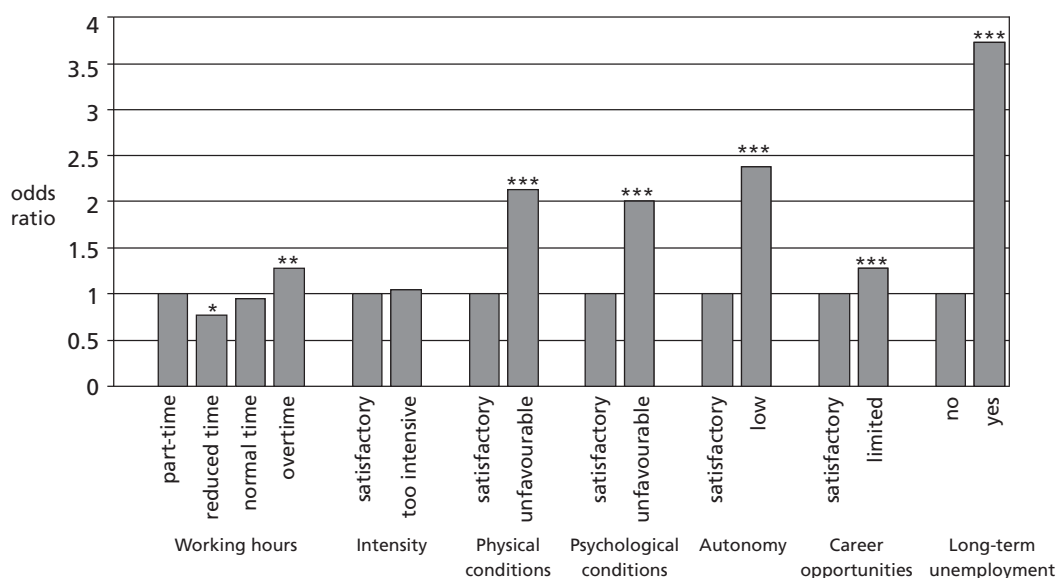
Working hours	Life satisfaction (%)				All
	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	
Part-time	2	10	58	30	100
Reduced time	1	14	60	25	100
Full-time	2	12	62	24	100
Over 48 hours work	4	18	57	21	100
All respondents	2	13	61	24	100

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

In studying the relationship between working hours and life satisfaction, it is striking that part-time work is associated with reduced dissatisfaction levels in each occupation class, while jobs requiring over 48 working hours a week seem to cause the highest proportion of dissatisfaction among non-skilled workers. In this category, 36% of those working over 48 hours are dissatisfied, whereas the corresponding figure among those working normal full-time hours does not exceed 20%. In relation to service workers, self-employed people and farmers, overtime leads to only slightly higher levels of dissatisfaction.

Multivariate analysis

The final section of this chapter moves from a bivariate analysis approach to a multivariate approach. More complex statistical methods, in the form of odds ratios, provide information about the relative influence of each dimension of working conditions on life satisfaction, and on the overall explanatory power of the various dimensions in forecasting life satisfaction.

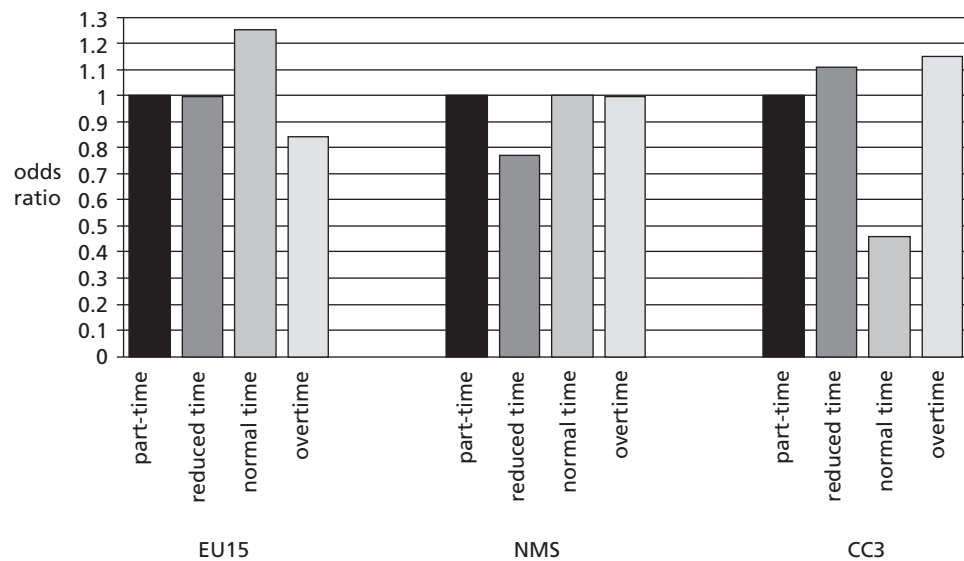
Figure 21 Life satisfaction and working hours, by dimensions of working conditions (odds ratio)

Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

The logistic regression model reveals seven dimensions of working conditions which indicate statistical correlation with life satisfaction for all 28 countries (see Figure 21). The strongest single effect, which has an odds ratio of over 3.7, relates to long-term unemployment. Also significant are unfavourable physical and psychological working conditions and low work autonomy, which have an odds ratio of between 2 and 2.3. Working overtime and limited career prospects have the lowest importance, while work intensity and reduced weekly working time are statistically insignificant. The overall effect of all working conditions factors on subjective quality of life is low with an R2 of 0.118.

These results confirm the findings of the bivariate analysis that paid employment is relatively more important than actual employment conditions for life satisfaction in the EU and candidate countries. It also confirms that working time issues are less important than autonomy and physical and psychological conditions, for overall subjective well-being. This could be an interesting conclusion for social partners, who often pay more attention to working time issues in collective bargaining than to ‘classical’ aspects of working conditions. Finally, it is significant that work intensity appears to have no direct influence on subjective quality of life, if other factors are considered. Evidently, the systematic and comprehensive intensification of work in recent decades has had no significant impact on the overall subjective life satisfaction of employees.

Figure 22 General satisfaction and working conditions in Europe, by working hours (odds ratio)

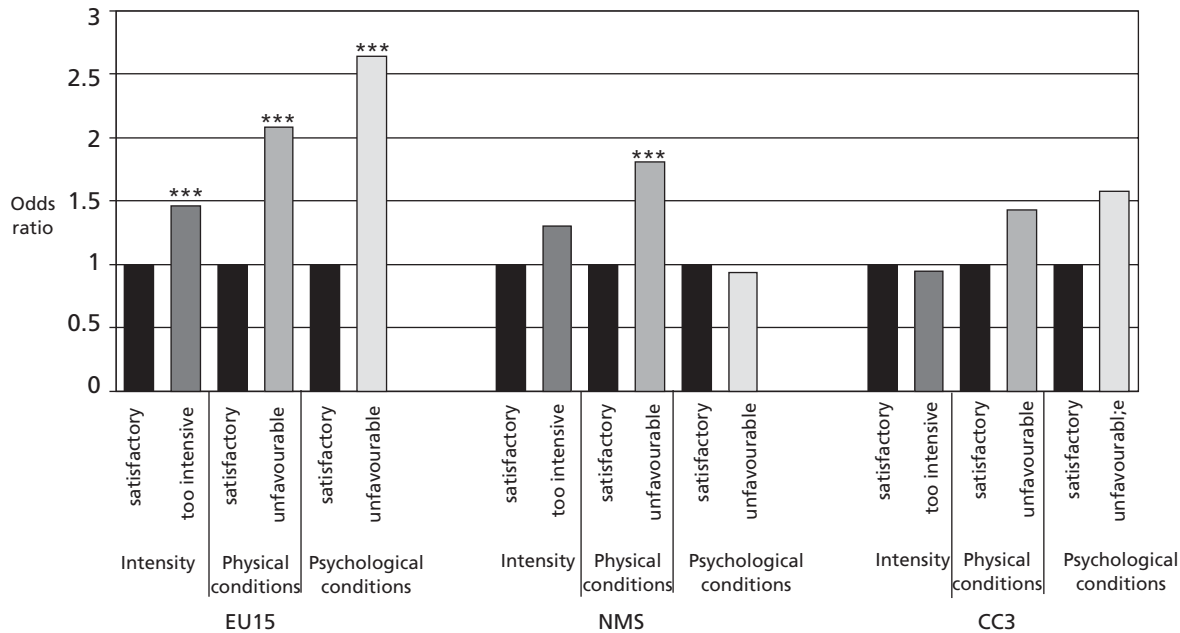


Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001

Are there different results for the various country groupings? Looking at the multivariate model for the EU15, the results differ significantly from the other country groupings (see Figures 22-24). Long-term unemployment experience continues to be the main influential factor, but with a slightly stronger effect on life satisfaction. In other words, long-term unemployment in the old Member States has a greater effect on subjective well-being than in the NMS. Secondly, the influence of work autonomy and physical working conditions is stronger. Lastly, none of the variables relating to working time have a significant influence on subjective quality of life in the EU15, i.e. part-time work does not lead to a significant increase in life satisfaction and longer working hours are not

associated with decreased satisfaction. Both of these results have to be controlled with other data, however, and with an R2 of 0.136, their overall explanatory power is not very high. In theoretical terms, nevertheless, this would confirm, to some degree, the extension thesis that working conditions do influence subjective quality of life.

Figure 23 General satisfaction and working conditions in Europe, by work intensity and physical and psychological conditions (odds ratios)

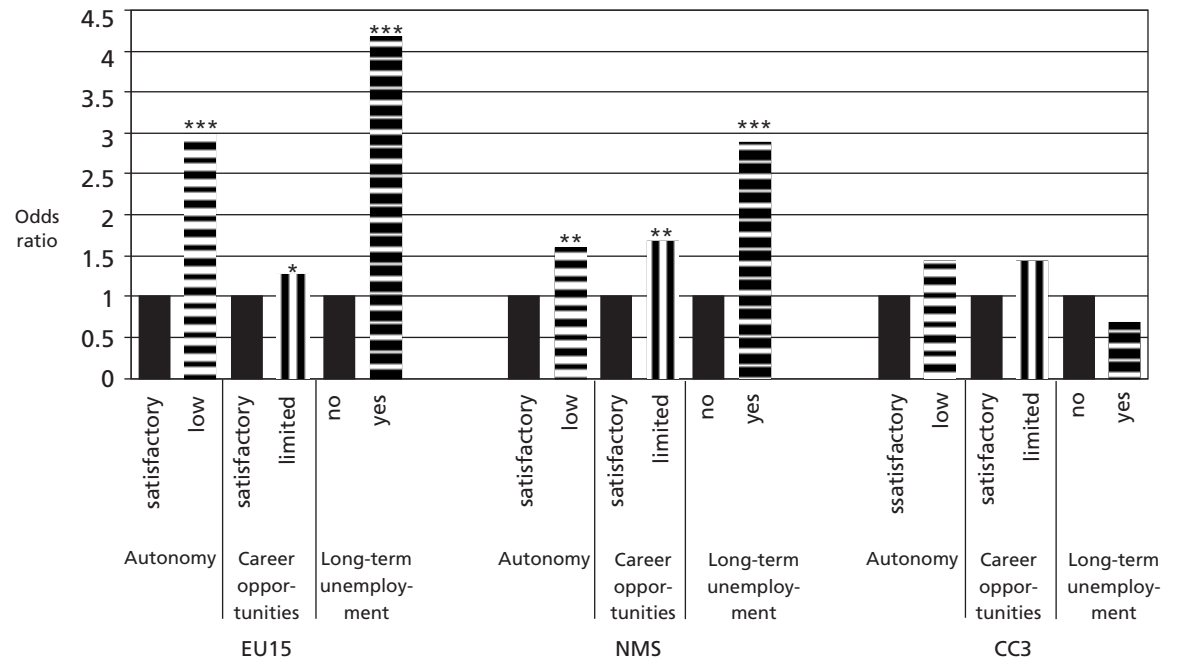


Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

In relation to the NMS, the number of working conditions with a statistically significant effect is further reduced. None of the working time variables, nor psychological working conditions and work intensity, have a significant effect on life satisfaction. Long-term unemployment experience remains an important factor, although it is less influential in the NMS. The same is true for the remaining variables. With an R2 of 0.065, the overall explanatory power of these variables is, therefore, very low.

Finally, one particularly unique feature in relation to the candidate countries Bulgaria and Romania is the fact that none of the individual aspects of working conditions has a statistically significant effect on the overall level of subjective well-being. This means that overall life satisfaction in Bulgaria and Romania is completely separate from the quality of working conditions. This result supports the theoretical basis of the separation thesis in relation to work and other aspects of quality of life.

Figure 24 General satisfaction and working conditions in Europe, by autonomy, career opportunities and long-term unemployment (odds ratios)



Source: Candidate Countries Eurobarometer, 2002; Eurobarometer 56.1, 2001. *p<0.05, **p<0.01, ***p<0.001.

This initial attempt by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions to analyse the relationship between quality of work and quality of life, on the basis of quantitative comparative data, confirms the importance of such an analysis for various European policy domains. The overall results of this analysis support the idea of a dynamic relationship between living and working conditions, and confirm the extension thesis that there is a limited 'spill-over' from demanding working conditions into reduced subjective quality of life.

However, three further qualifications need to be made here. Firstly, the statistical relationship observed between conditions in the economic and private sphere is weak. Secondly, the extension thesis is not confirmed in relation to two candidate countries – Bulgaria and Romania. Thirdly, although quality of working conditions is important for people's perceived quality of life, being in employment and, in particular, not being long-term unemployed, is more important for the citizens in an enlarged EU. This result underlines the importance assigned to the creation of employment and improved competitiveness in the European Employment Strategy (EES), and more recently in the re-defined Lisbon Strategy, by the European Commission and in the report of the High Level Group of Wim Kok (2004).

The EES aims to promote both volume and quality of employment simultaneously, and highlights the positive relationship between both aspects of employment policy. However, in relation to the subjective well-being of citizens in Europe, involuntary, long-term exclusion from work is perceived as the greater evil, compared with disadvantageous working conditions. The social partners should take note, therefore, that as well as concentrating their efforts on working conditions, working time and wages, they also need to contribute actively to the creation and protection of employment, e.g. through policies that promote greater employment and competitiveness, at national and at company level.

These results also point to the dilemma that, ultimately, 'bad' jobs are better for people's quality of life than no access to jobs at all over a prolonged period of time. To an extent, activation policies and the diffusion of flexible employment contracts in many Member States have tried to overcome this dilemma, by providing lower quality entry jobs in the labour market; such jobs will at least launch people on a career path that may eventually lead to a job with better working conditions.

The results of this analysis also highlight the relationship between the macro-level of economic development and the importance of better quality working conditions for subjective well-being. Increasingly, the importance of favourable working conditions impacting on higher life satisfaction, and therefore better subjective quality of life, is becoming more evident in the EU15, NMS and candidate countries. Assuming that economic and social conditions in each of these country groupings will continue to improve, the importance of quality of work aspects will increase for employees in those countries. This means that EU policies promoting higher standards among the NMS, similar to standards in the EU15, should also include programmes supporting the improvement of working conditions in the NMS. In this respect, it remains open to what extent and in which domains there is a difference in relation to quality of work between the two country groupings, as the evidence is somewhat conflicting.

In relation to the different aspects of working conditions, disadvantageous physical working conditions have the strongest effect on subjective well-being. On the other hand, various dimensions of weekly working time have little influence in the EU15 and no influence at all in the

NMS and candidate countries. This result appears to contradict the focus that is given to weekly working time issues, both in collective bargaining and in labour law. According to the figures in this analysis, more attention should be given to reducing demanding physical working conditions, which seem to be recognised as unacceptable in the context of overall economic, technological and social progress.

The effect of working conditions on social relations (family and friends) is strongly discussed in the debate on work–life balance. The importance of this issue is also confirmed by the results of this study. A significant minority of employees perceive negative effects of working conditions on social relations. A statistical analysis shows the strongest effect among employees who work under demanding physical and psychological working conditions and who experience high work intensity. If the social partners are concerned about the work–life balance issue, they need to focus not only on working time issues, but also on the design of workplaces in a way that will enable employees to work under optimal, socio-technical conditions.

The perceived negative effects of working conditions on social relations are not translated into employees' cognitive dissatisfaction with family and social life. A statistical analysis of influential factors reveals only a low level of association with detrimental working conditions. One dominant influential factor, however, which is demonstrated by the results and confirmed by the indicator on general life satisfaction, is the significant influence of unemployment experience on family and social life.

Finally, it should be highlighted that these are only preliminary results, which need to be supported by further conceptual and empirical work. The statistical analysis is more of a tentative and exploratory nature than conclusive. The construction of indices on working conditions has to be improved, for example, and a composite index should be developed, with unemployment experience and risks of unemployment clearly distinguished. In relation to dependent variables, more dimensions of subjective quality of life and life satisfaction need to be included, and a composite index of subjective quality of life should be developed. In addition, new and more integrated data sources of the Foundation – in particular, the Foundation's recent Quality of Life Survey in 28 European countries – need to be used in the analysis. Further analysis should also measure, more systematically, the effect of macro-economic and overall labour market conditions on the relationship between quality of work and quality of life. Such an in-depth analysis should also provide for further input from the individual citizen's perspective in relation to the discussion on the further development of the Lisbon Strategy.

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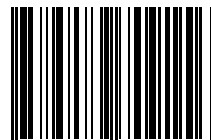
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