European Working Conditions Survey 2024

Background

Job quality and its improvement are important policy concerns. Quality jobs are a prerequisite for greater labour force participation and increased productivity, as highlighted in the recent **Competitiveness Compass** (European Commission, 2025). Good quality jobs are associated with better health and well-being, improved engagement and motivation at work, and greater use and development of skills. A healthy, skilled, engaged and motivated workforce is the foundation of Europe's competitiveness.

The **Quality Jobs Roadmap**, which the European Commission is preparing in 2025 together with the social partners, acknowledges this relationship. This flagship initiative aims to contribute to the competitiveness of European industries by supporting Member States and industry in providing quality jobs characterised by fair wages, good working conditions, training and fair job transitions for workers and self-employed individuals.

The **European Working Conditions Survey** (EWCS) shows **progress in many dimensions** of job quality. There has been a reduction in working hours and more workers have access to flexible working time arrangements, leading to an **overall improvement in working time quality**. More workers are able to grow their skills at work and have **access to training** – a key element for ensuring a just transition to a climate-neutral, digital economy.

However, **challenges persist** in other areas and new challenges are emerging in a changing world of work. **Gender differences** in job quality require continued attention; **heat exposure** is becoming an issue for more workers; **sedentary jobs** are a health risk for many workers; and some sectors, such as financial services, see a substantial share of workers having to **adapt to algorithmic management**.

These first findings show how job quality in the EU has evolved over time. They provide information on work–life balance and workers' health and well-being, while also presenting data on technology use and workers' preferences.

Trends in job quality

The concept of job quality has evolved over several decades. Earlier approaches tended to emphasise dimensions such as wages, type of employment contract, social protection coverage, working time, and health and safety. Over time, the concept has been enriched to include aspects of work such as autonomy, work intensity, skills use and exposure to psychosocial risks. The aim was to capture both job resources and job demands experienced by workers, but also the benefits for companies and organisations that employ them.

Box 1: Monitoring job quality through the European Working Conditions Survey

Eurofound has been monitoring the development of job quality in Europe through its European Working Conditions Survey since 1990. After 1990, the survey was carried out in 1995, 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015. The latest edition was conducted between February and December 2024. A total of 36 644 workers across 35 countries were interviewed. In the 27 EU Member States, more than 27 000 workers participated in the face-to-face interviews. Interviews followed a standardised questionnaire, available in 32 languages and 49 language versions. Interviewees were selected using probability sampling, which led to a representative sample of the EU labour force.

Although the questionnaire has evolved over the years and has been substantially expanded, trends can be established for a range of indicators. New questions have been added to capture the latest developments in the world of work.

Eurofound sees job quality as a composition of the characteristics of work and employment that have an impact, positive or negative, on workers' health and well-being. This is measured at the job level using seven **job quality dimensions** (each measured by an index) that capture these characteristics:

1. Physical environment
2. Social environment
3. Working time quality
4. Work intensity
5. Skills and discretion
6. Prospects
7. Earnings

The indicators capture demands on workers as well as resources that are at their disposal.

- **Job demands** are job attributes that require an effort and increase a worker's risk of poorer health and well-being.
- **Job resources** are features that support workers, by reducing job demands and their physiological and psychological costs, by helping workers achieve their work goals, and by fostering personal growth.

Job quality is clearly multidimensional. It is not just one aspect that makes a job a good job.

Physical environment

Key findings

- **Overall trend: The quality of the physical work environment has been improving since 2010 for both men and women. The rate of improvement has been faster for men.**
- Specific risks: The general improvement is due to a reduction in most physical risks. However, exposure to high temperatures and chemical contact has increased.
- Gender differences in exposure: Men are more exposed to risks like vibrations, noise and heavy loads, while women are more exposed to lifting people, sedentary sitting and infectious diseases. Both men and women report similar exposure to tiring or painful positions.
- Occupational hazards: Workers in specific fields like crafts, agriculture and machine operation face a higher accumulation of multiple physical risks.
- High temperatures: Episodic exposure to high temperatures (25 %–75 % of the time) has increased, potentially due to climate change. Men are more exposed to this than women (34 % versus 18 %). Workers in agriculture, construction and industry are most affected.
- Prolonged sitting: A significant portion of workers, particularly women (42 % versus 39 % of men), report sitting for long periods. This is linked to the digitalisation of work.

Physical environment explained

The absence of physical hazards that pose a risk to health and well-being is an acknowledged and uncontested feature of job quality. Eliminating or minimising these risks are a priority for EU policymaking. This is evident in the EU Strategic Framework on Health and Safety 2021–2027, which aims to anticipate and manage change in the context of the green, digital and demographic transitions. **Whereas the physical environment has improved overall, specific risks, such as working in high temperatures and sitting for prolonged periods, are of increasing concern.**

Physical environment index

The Physical environment index captures exposure to physical risks and to physical demands (the physical requirements and exertions that are necessary to perform a task or an activity). It is measured on a scale from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating a better physical environment. The index is made up of the 13 indicators listed in Table 1.

Table 1: Physical environment indicators

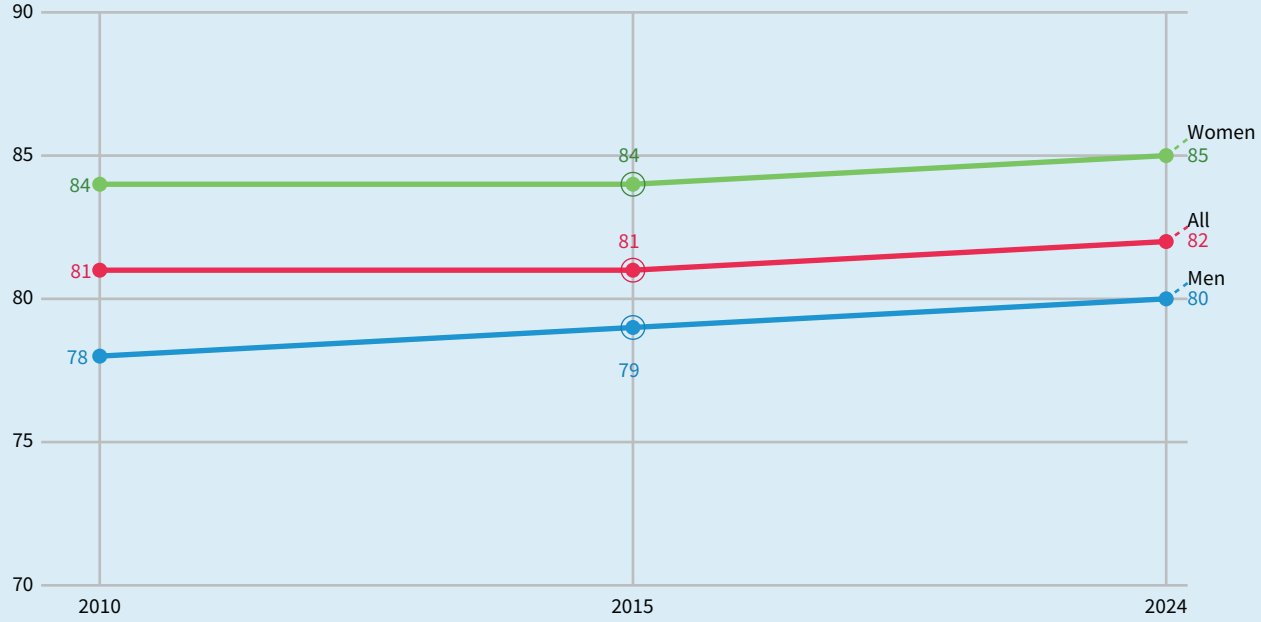
Sub-dimension	Item
Physical risks	Noise so loud that you would have to raise your voice to talk to people
	High temperatures which make you perspire even when not working
	Low temperatures whether indoors or outdoors
	Breathing in smoke, fumes, powder or dust
	Breathing in vapours, such as solvents and thinners
	Handling or being in skin contact with chemical products or substances
	Handling or being in direct contact with materials which can be infectious
Physical demands	Tiring or painful positions
	Lifting or moving people
	Carrying or moving heavy loads
	Repetitive hand or arm movements
	Sitting for periods of at least half an hour at a time, for three quarters of the time or more
	Vibrations from hand tools, machinery

Note: *Item in blue was added to the index in 2024 and is not included in the 'slim' index used for measuring trends over time.*
Source: *EWCS 2024. Unless stated otherwise, all figures and tables are sourced from the EWCS 2024. When averages are presented in this report, they always refer to averages for the EU-27.*

Progress over time

Physical environment quality has been slowly improving since 2010 for both men and women (Figure 1). The quality of the physical environment remains higher for women than for men, but the gender gap has decreased from 6 points down to 5, acknowledging faster progress for men than for

Figure 1: Physical environment index, by gender, 2010–2024, EU-27



Notes: *The EWCS collects information on the self-reported gender identity of respondents. All graphs referring to gender in this report cover those who identify as men and women. Due to the small sample size, the results of non-binary workers are not reported. This note applies to gender in all charts in this document.*

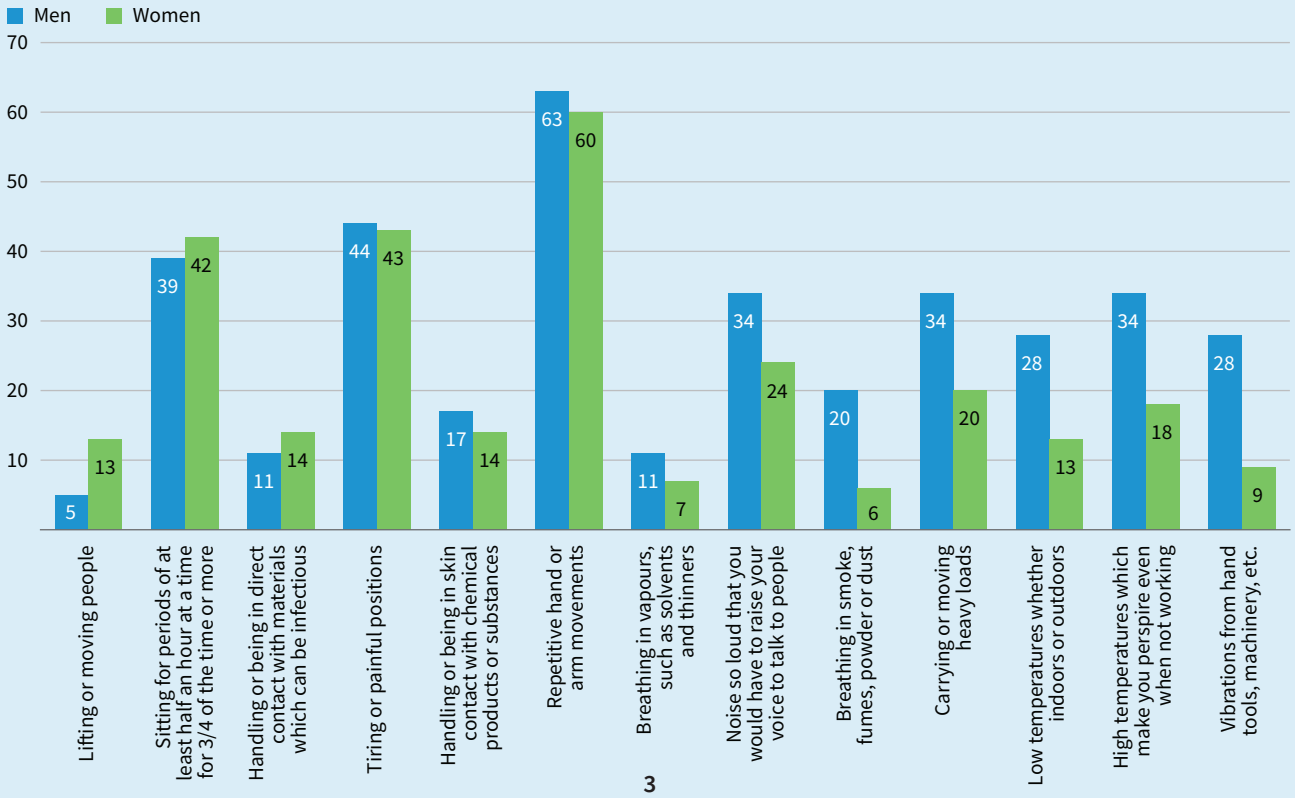
women in this dimension. The improvement is due to a reduction in exposure to most physical risks and demands for which trends are available. The exceptions are exposure to high temperatures and handling or being in skin contact with chemical products or substances, which have increased.

Differences in exposure to physical risks and demands

Exposure to physical risks is related to specific conditions in different activities in the economy and occur in the context of gender-segregated occupations. Men are most exposed to vibrations, chemicals, noise, high and low temperatures, carrying and moving heavy loads, breathing in smoke, breathing in solvents and repetitive arm movements. Women are most exposed to lifting or moving people, sedentary sitting and infectious diseases. Men and women report similar levels of exposure to tiring or painful positions. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of physical risks and demands.

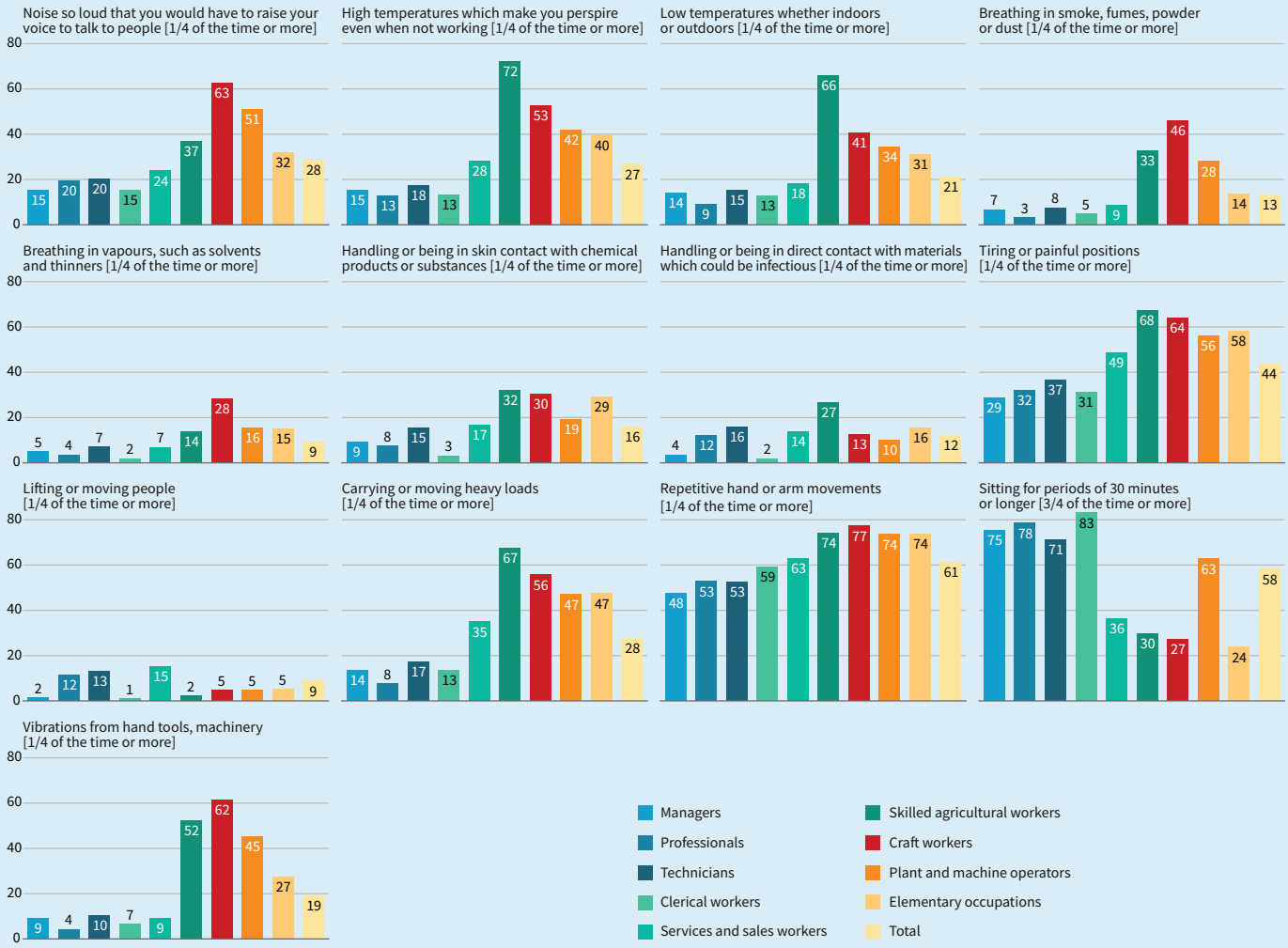
Exposure to multiple physical risks and demands is likely to increase the negative impact on health. In this context, the situation of craft workers, skilled agricultural workers and plant and machine operators is of particular concern, as they accumulate exposure to most physical risks and

Figure 2: Exposure to physical risks and demands, by gender, EU-27 (%)



physical demands. Services and sales workers report higher exposure to high temperatures, painful positions, carrying and moving heavy loads, and repetitive movements. Technicians, professionals (e.g. scientists, doctors, teachers), clerical workers and managers are most exposed to sedentary sitting (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Physical risks and demands by occupation, EU-27 (%)



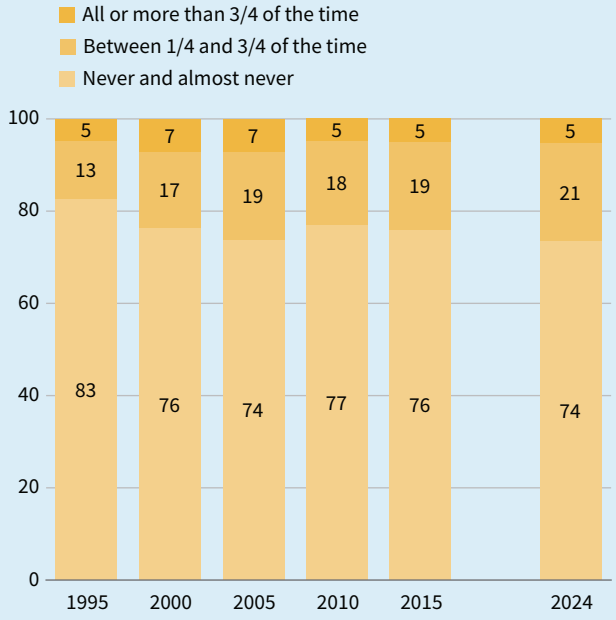
Work in high temperatures

Workers' exposure to 'high temperatures which make you perspire even when not working', has been captured in the EWCS since 1995. Exposure to high temperatures all or more than three quarters of the time has remained stable (Figure 4). This applies to people who are working in a very hot environment, for example in a foundry or kitchen. However, episodic exposure (between one quarter and three quarters of the time) has increased. In 2024, 34 % of men and 18 % of women reported exposure to high temperatures at least a quarter of the time.

The increase could point to the effects of climate change. When looking at sectors, workers in agriculture (68 %), construction (52 %), industry and transport (both 33 %) report above average exposure to high temperatures a quarter or more of the time. Many of these workers are working outdoors.

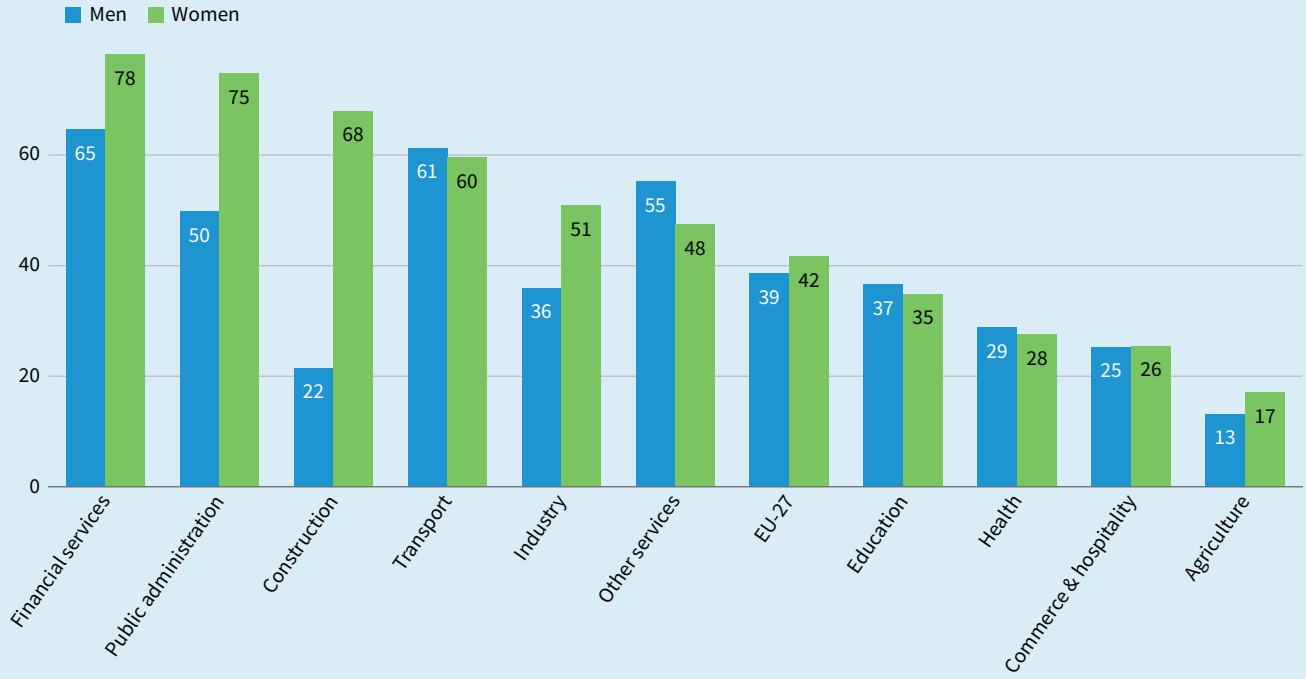
Exposure to high temperatures intensifies the risk of heat stress and of work accidents caused by fatigue and reduced vigilance (Eurofound, 2024). The negative impact of high

Figure 4: High temperatures, by intensity of exposure, 1995–2024, EU-27 (%)



Note: *No data were available for 2020.*

Figure 5: Sitting for prolonged periods for three quarters of the time or more, by sector and gender, EU-27 (%)



temperatures on health increases with age and for those with chronic disease.

Sitting for long periods

Many workers find themselves sitting at their desks and workstations for prolonged periods of time, mainly due to the digitalisation of work processes and increased computer use. Some 42 % of women and 39 % of men report sitting for periods of at least 30 minutes for three quarters of their working time (Figure 5).

A look at exposure to prolonged sitting by sector shows stark differences between men and women in some sectors. This confirms that men and women often hold different functions within the same industry leading to different exposure to physical risks in the same sector, with construction being the most extreme example.

Social environment

Key findings

- **Overall trend: Social environments improved marginally between 2010 and 2015 and have remained stable since. However, the gender gap has widened in this period, with women's 'Social environment index' scores consistently lower than men's, due mainly to greater exposure to adverse social behaviour.**
- The prevalence of most adverse social behaviour remains low and stable, but verbal abuse and humiliating behaviours are persistent concerns.
- Women are more likely than men to experience most forms of adverse social behaviour, with the exception of physical violence and threats, where there is no gender difference.
- Exposure to adverse social behaviour is higher in the public sector (public administration, health and education), probably due to frequent interaction with the public.
- Direct and frequent interaction with the public (customers, patients, pupils) increases the likelihood of experiencing adverse social behaviours, particularly verbal abuse, threats and physical violence.
- Social support is generally high. Colleagues provide more support than managers, with 73 % of employees reporting support from colleagues versus 64 % (of men) and 65 % (of women) from managers.
- The transport sector shows the highest proportion of workers who report rarely or never receiving support. This lack of support may worsen the effects of high job demands in this sector.

Social environment explained

A supportive social environment at work plays an important role in shaping job quality, with implications for employee well-being and productivity. The quality of leadership significantly influences well-being, engagement and trust in the workplace. Support from colleagues and supervisors serves as a crucial job resource, helping to balance job demands and buffer the negative effects of adverse social behaviour. Adverse social behaviour remains a concern particularly for those working with third parties such as customers, passengers, pupils or patients. In 2024, a fifth of them reported exposure to some form of adverse social behaviour.

Social environment index

The Social environment index assesses the quality of management, social support from managers and colleagues and the extent to which workers experience positive social interactions, or conversely, feelings of loneliness at work. It also looks at exposure to adverse social behaviour at work. It is measured on a scale from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating a better social environment. It comprises the indicators listed in Table 2.

Progress over time

The Social environment index score increased by one point between 2015 and 2024, after having decreased by two points between 2010 and 2015 (Figure 6). The existing gender gap increased between 2015 and 2024, with women's scores consistently lower than men's, primarily due to their greater exposure to adverse social behaviour.

Adverse social behaviour

Adverse social behaviour in the workplace affects the quality of the social climate, with well-documented negative consequences for both individuals and organisations. In each edition of the survey, the EWCS asks workers about their experiences with various forms of adverse social behaviour.

Although the prevalence of most adverse social behaviours in the EU is relatively low, and rates for most behaviours have remained relatively stable over the past three survey editions, the persistently higher prevalence of verbal abuse and humiliating behaviours is a concern (Figure 7).

There is a sectoral dimension, with workers in the public sector disproportionately exposed to adverse social behaviours, probably due to the high levels of interaction

Table 2: Social environment indicators

Sub-dimension	Item
Adverse social behaviour (at least one)	Exposure to verbal abuse
	Exposure to unwanted sexual attention
	Exposure to threats
	Exposure to humiliating behaviours
	Exposure to physical violence
	Exposure to sexual harassment
	Exposure to cyberbullying
	Exposure to bullying
Discrimination	Discrimination (on the basis of age, ethnic background/origin, race or colour, nationality/ citizenship, sex or gender, religion, disability, sexual orientation, or other)
Social support	Help and support from colleagues (or peers for self-employed people)
	Help and support from manager
	Lonely at work
Leadership quality	Your immediate boss respects you as a person
	Your immediate boss is successful in getting people to work together
	Your immediate boss makes you feel comfortable about discussing your personal and family issues
	Your immediate boss provides useful feedback
	Your immediate boss encourages and supports your development
	Your immediate boss clearly explains decisions that affect your work

Note: *Items in blue were added to the index in 2024 and are not included in the 'slim' index used for measuring trends over time.*

Figure 6: Social environment index (0–100), by gender, 2010–2024, EU-27

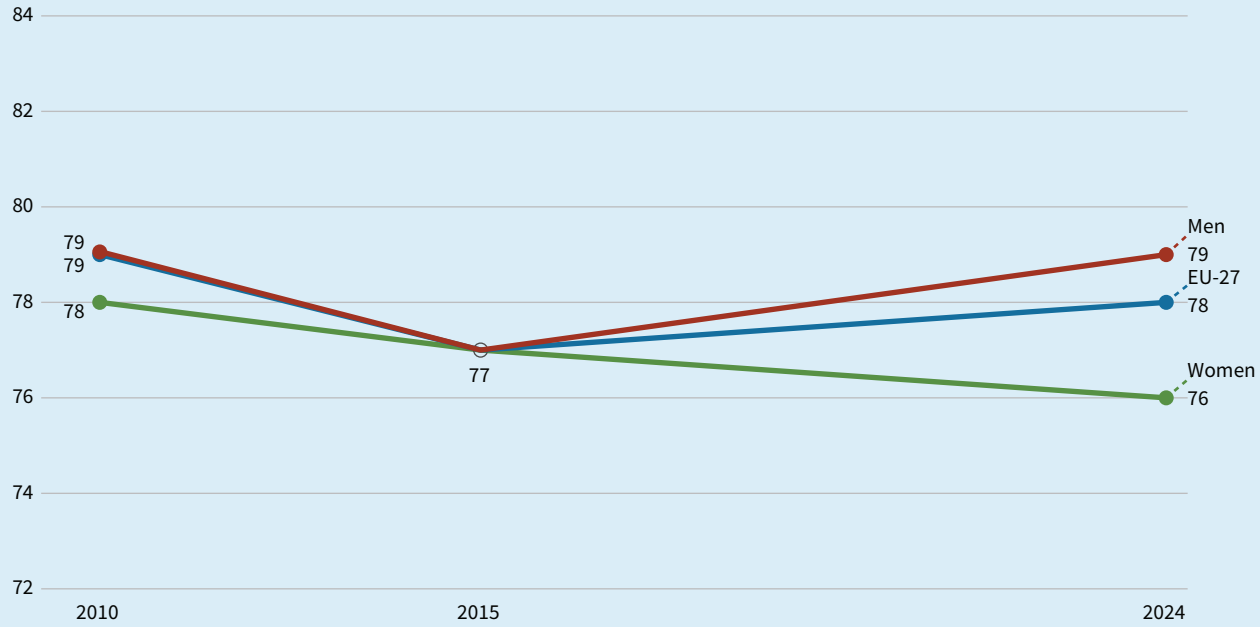
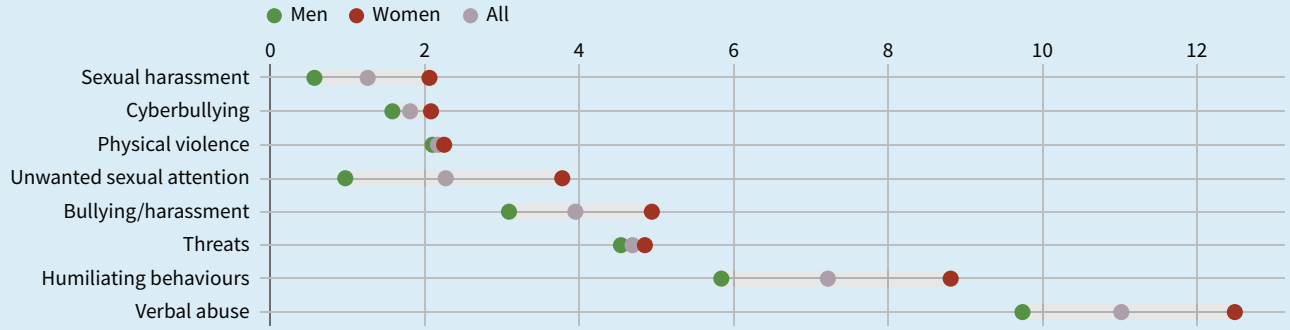


Figure 7: Prevalence of adverse social behaviours, by gender, 2024, EU-27, (%)

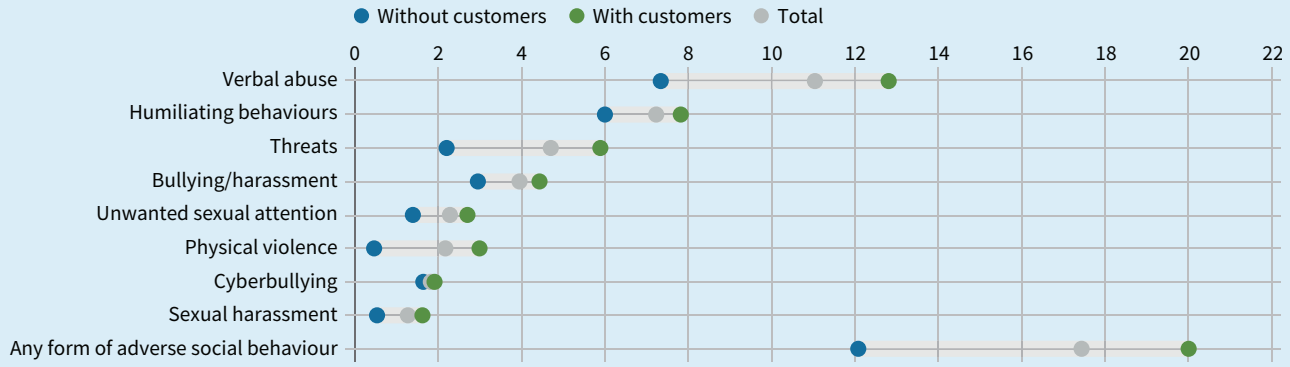


with the public in public sector employment. For instance, verbal abuse is most prevalent in public administration (17 %), followed closely by the health and education sectors (both 15 %). These sectors also exhibit the highest rates of humiliating behaviours, with 10 % reported in the health sector and 9 % in the education sector. Women, whose employment tends to be concentrated in client-facing sectors, are more likely than men to report exposure to most adverse social behaviour. The only exceptions to this trend are physical violence and threats, where no gender differences are observed.

Although the survey did not ask workers about the source of these behaviours (i.e. whether they came from co-workers, supervisors or third parties) it did include a question about how often their main job involved direct interaction with individuals who are not employees, such as customers, passengers, pupils or patients. This may offer some insight into the prevalence of adverse social behaviour originating from third parties.

Having to deal with customers for a quarter or more of their working time increases the likelihood of workers experiencing adverse social behaviour, compared to those who rarely or never deal with customers (Figure 8). This is particularly true in the case of exposure to verbal abuse, threats and physical violence and to a lesser extent, humiliating behaviours, bullying/harassment and unwanted sexual attention.

Figure 8: Prevalence of adverse social behaviour, by whether or not work involves dealing with customers, EU-27 (%)



Note: *The category 'with customers' includes anyone who reports that their work involves dealing with customers at least a quarter of the time, while the category 'without customers' refers to those who report never or almost never dealing with customers. This analysis is based on questions addressed to all respondents, i.e. employees and self-employed people.*

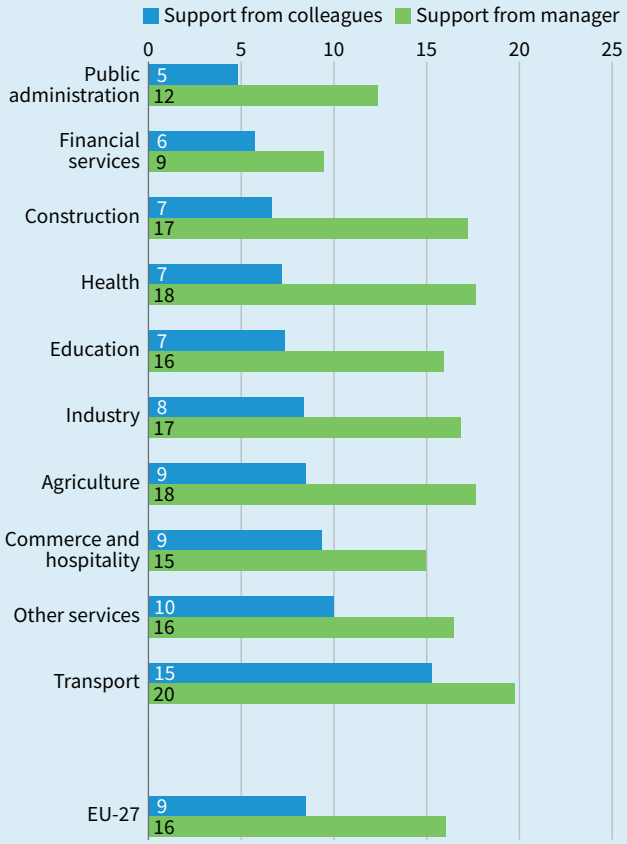
Social support from colleagues and managers

Social support remains high. 73 % of both female and male employees report getting support always or most of the time from their colleagues; 64 % of men and 65 % of women report getting support from managers.

Social support from colleagues is greater than that from managers: while 8 % of employees report that they rarely or never receive support from colleagues, the proportion rises to 16 % for those who rarely or never receive support from managers.

However, there are sectoral differences. The highest proportion of workers who report that they rarely or never receive support from either managers or colleagues work in the transport sector (Figure 9). This reduced access to an important job resource may exacerbate the high job demands already experienced by workers in this sector, such as high levels of work intensity, potentially further compromising workers' well-being.

Figure 9: Share of workers who report rarely or never receiving support, by sector, EU-27 (%)



Working time quality

Key findings

- **Overall trend: Working time quality has been improving for both men and women over the last two decades. The gender gap in this area has closed, with men's 'Working time quality index' scores catching up to women's in 2024, thanks to positive trends in working hours and arrangements.**
- Decrease in long working hours: The share of workers putting in long hours has decreased significantly. Since 2005, the percentage of workers putting in more than 10 hours a day fell from 37 % to 28 %, and the share of those working over 48 hours a week reduced from 19 % to 11 %.
- Increased worker control and flexibility: Workers are gaining more control over their hours. While half of men have some control, only 43 % of women do. The percentage of employees able to adapt their working hours has increased greatly since 2010.
- Changes in atypical work: The number of workers on atypical schedules, such as weekends or at night, has been decreasing. However, the share of people doing shift work has remained stable.

Working time quality explained

The duration and organisation of working time is important for job quality for two main reasons. First, working time plays a key role in workers' health and well-being through a 'dose-response' (1) relationship. The longer the working hours the more exposed workers are to the workplace risks present in their jobs, and the more likely it is for work to affect their health negatively. Having sufficient periods for rest is crucial for proper recovery. Second, a good fit between working time and non-working time is essential for workers to be able to work and continue working throughout an extended working life. **Overall, working time quality has improved for everyone. Men's working time quality has been improving faster, allowing them to catch up with women who traditionally experienced higher working time quality.**

Working time quality index

The Working time quality index comprises four sub-dimensions: duration, atypical working time, working time arrangements and flexibility. It includes the indicators listed in Table 3. The index is measured on a scale from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating a better working time quality.

Table 3: Working time quality indicators

Sub-dimension	Item
Duration – long working hours	Long working hours (48 hours or more a week)
	No recovery period (less than 11 hours between two working days in the past month)
	Long working days (10 hours or more per day)
Duration – very short working hours not aligned with preferences	(Very) short involuntary working hours
Atypical working hours	Weekend work
	Night work
	Shift work (and type)
Flexibility	Can take a break when you wish
	Arranging to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters
	Work in free time to meet work demands
Working time arrangements	Control over working time arrangements • Set by the company/organisation with no possibility for changes • Choice between several fixed working schedules determined by the company/organisation • Can adapt working hours within certain limits (e.g. flexitime) • Working hours are entirely determined by him/herself
	Change in working time arrangements • No regular change • Change, the same day • Change, the day before • Change, several days in advance • Change, several weeks in advance
Predictability	Predictable working hours in the next month (*'yes, quite accurately'; 'yes, but approximately'; 'no'*)

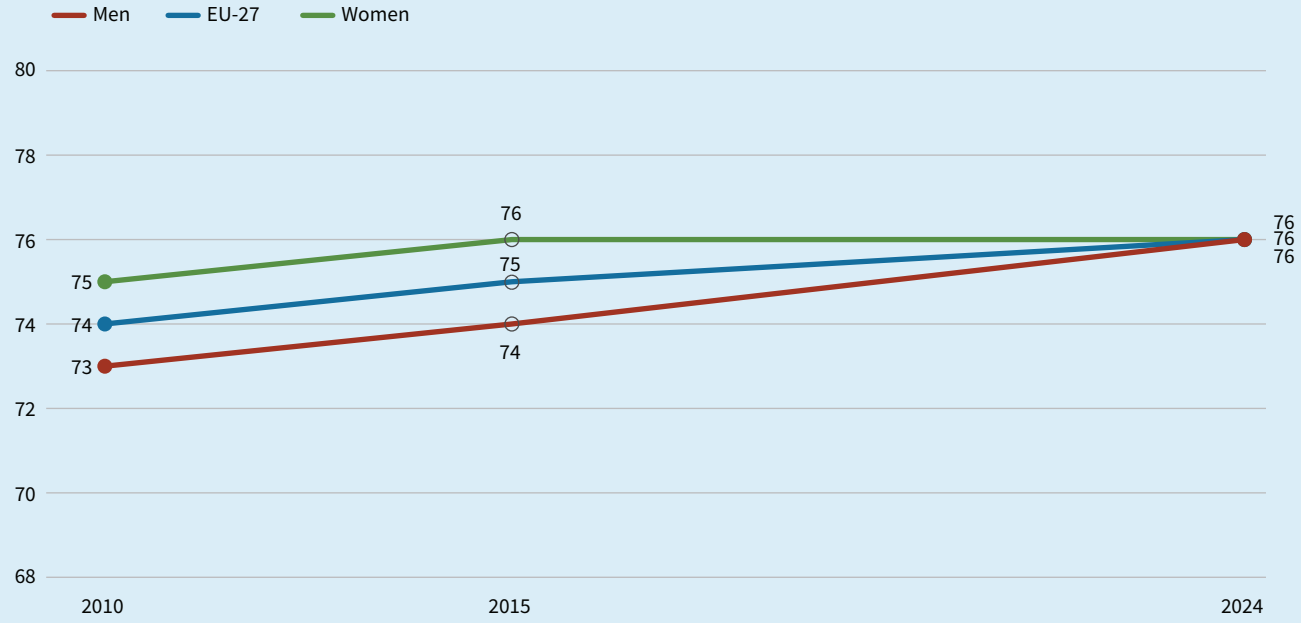
Note: *Items in blue were added to the index in 2024 and are not included in the 'slim' index used for measuring trends over time.*

(1) A dose-response relationship is one in which increasing levels of exposure are associated with either an increasing or a decreasing risk of the outcome.

Progress over time

The Working time quality index has been increasing over the last two decades for both women and men, with the latter catching up with their female counterparts in 2024 (Figure 10). This is the result of positive developments in most of the indicators of working time quality, including in terms of duration, atypical working hours and working time arrangements. The shares of workers reporting that they work over the weekend or at night has, for instance, been decreasing over the last two decades. The share of those doing shift work has remained stable.

Figure 10: Working time quality index (0–100), by gender, 2010–2024, EU-27

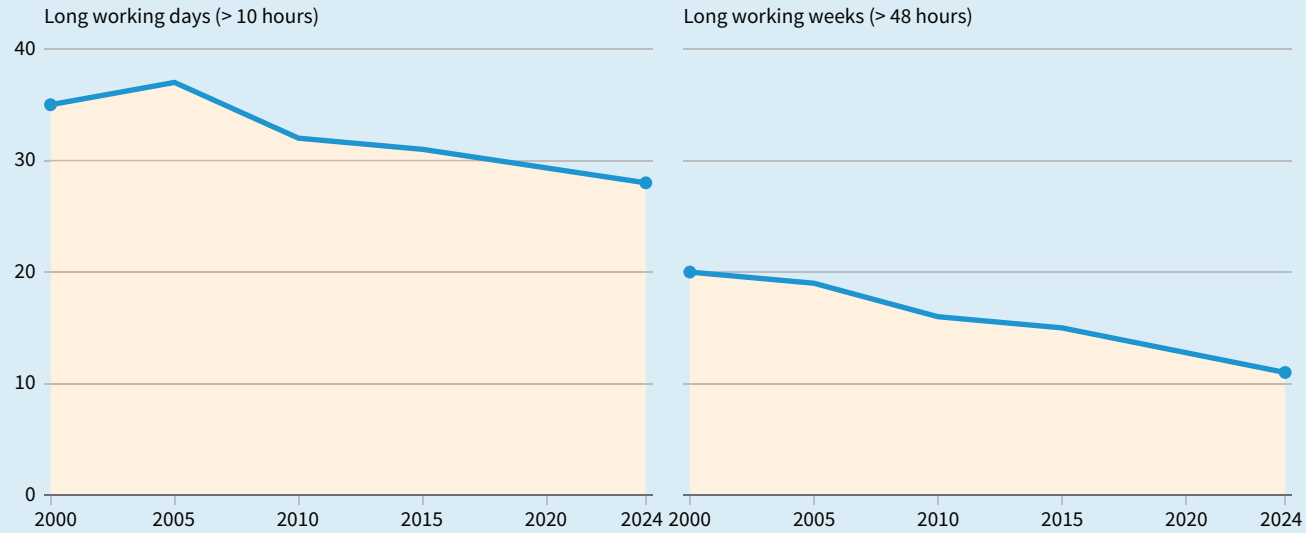


Working long hours

Devoting between 35 and 40 hours to paid work in a main job over five days per week was still the predominant pattern in the EU in 2024. This is the situation for 51 % of workers (56 % of men and 46 % of women), which represents a reinforcement of the pattern seen in 2015. The pattern is more pronounced in Poland (where it applies to 60 % of workers), Portugal (63 %), Bulgaria (68 %) and Hungary (74 %), but less so in Greece and Italy (40 %). In the Netherlands, where part-time arrangements are more common, half the working population report fewer than 35 weekly working hours in their main job over 5 or fewer days a week.

The shares of workers who reported working 10 hours or more on a given day and/or reported 48 hours or more of work per week on a regular basis have been decreasing. The share of EU-27 workers who reported working more than 10 hours a day at least once in the month prior to the survey fell from 37 % in 2005 to 28 % in 2024, while the share of those working 48 hours or more per week decreased from 19 % in 2005 to 11 % in 2024 (Figure 11).

Figure 11: Share of workers reporting long working weeks and long days, 2000–2024, EU-27 (%)



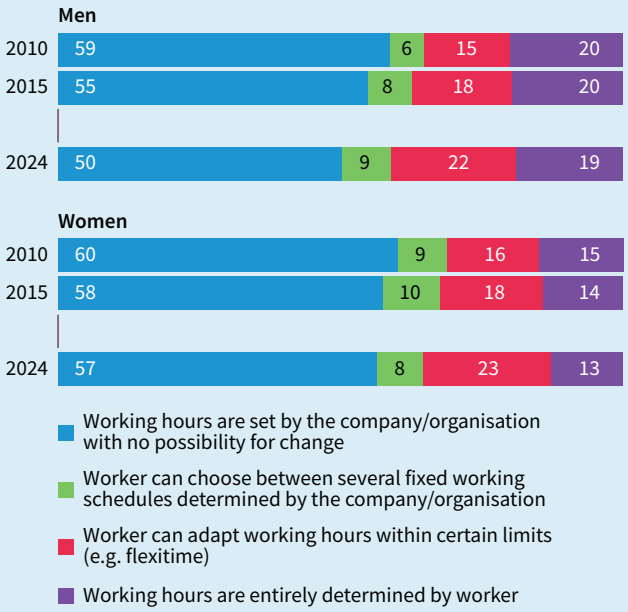
Such practice continues to be more common among men than women: on average, men worked approximately 2.3 long days per month (3.1 days in 2015) and women 1.3 (1.6 in 2015).

Another expression of working long hours is when workers use their free time to deal with work demands. Such practice has been diminishing in importance: it was reported several times per week or more by 20 % of workers in 2024, down from 31 % in 2010.

Workers' control over working hours

All in all, workers are gaining increasing control over their working hours. However, this applies more to male workers than to their female counterparts: in 2024, half of male workers and 44 % of female workers had some to complete control over their working hours (Figure 12). A significant majority (76 %) of self-employed workers have complete control over the duration and organisation of their working hours but this is the case for only a tiny share of employees (6 %). The share of employees whose working hours are entirely determined by their employer has been decreasing since 2010, but in 2024 it was still the case for 6 out of every 10 employees. At the same time, the share of employees who are able to adapt working hours within certain limits has increased greatly from 16 % in 2010 to 22 % in 2024.

Figure 12: Working hour arrangements, by gender, 2010–2024, EU-27 (%)



Note: *Values may not always add up to 100 % due to rounding.*

Flexibility has also improved in other ways: fewer workers report having difficulty taking an hour or two off during working hours to attend to personal or family matters (the proportion decreased from 37 % in 2010 to 31 % in 2024) and fewer report rarely or never being able to take a break when they wish (from 37 % in 2005 to 29 % in 2024).

Work intensity

Key findings

- **Overall trend: The 'Work intensity index' shows diverging trends for men and women: it has deteriorated for women but improved for men.**
- The transport sector has the most workers facing tight deadlines and high-speed work. Workers in education are most likely to feel they do not have enough time, while healthcare workers experience the most disruptive interruptions.
- The industrial sector has the highest number of workers with three or more factors determining their work pace, often driven by automatic systems.
- Women are more likely than men to face high-speed work, frequent interruptions and higher emotional demands. This is largely because they are overrepresented in professions that require extensive public interaction, like healthcare and education.
- The healthcare sector has the highest emotional demands, linked to frequent public interaction. These workers often have to hide their feelings, deal with angry clients and handle emotionally disturbing situations.

Work intensity explained

Work intensity is measured by high exposure to quantitative and emotional demands, as well as multiple pace determinants. While moderate work intensity can be stimulating and support engagement, sustained high intensity is linked to stress and reduced job satisfaction, ultimately undermining workers' physical and mental health. Addressing work intensity is therefore essential to promoting sustainable, high-quality employment that supports both performance and employee well-being.

Work intensity index

The Work intensity index includes three sub-dimensions that measure job demands: quantitative demands; interdependency (whether the pace of work is influenced by three or more of the following pace determinants: production targets, machinery, colleagues, supervisors, direct demand, e.g. customers); and emotional demands. The Work intensity index comprises the indicators in Table 4.

The index is measured on a scale from 0 to 100. To maintain consistency with the interpretation of other job quality indices – each ranging from 0 to 100, where higher scores indicate better outcomes – higher scores on the Work intensity index should be interpreted as more favourable for workers because their work intensity is lower.

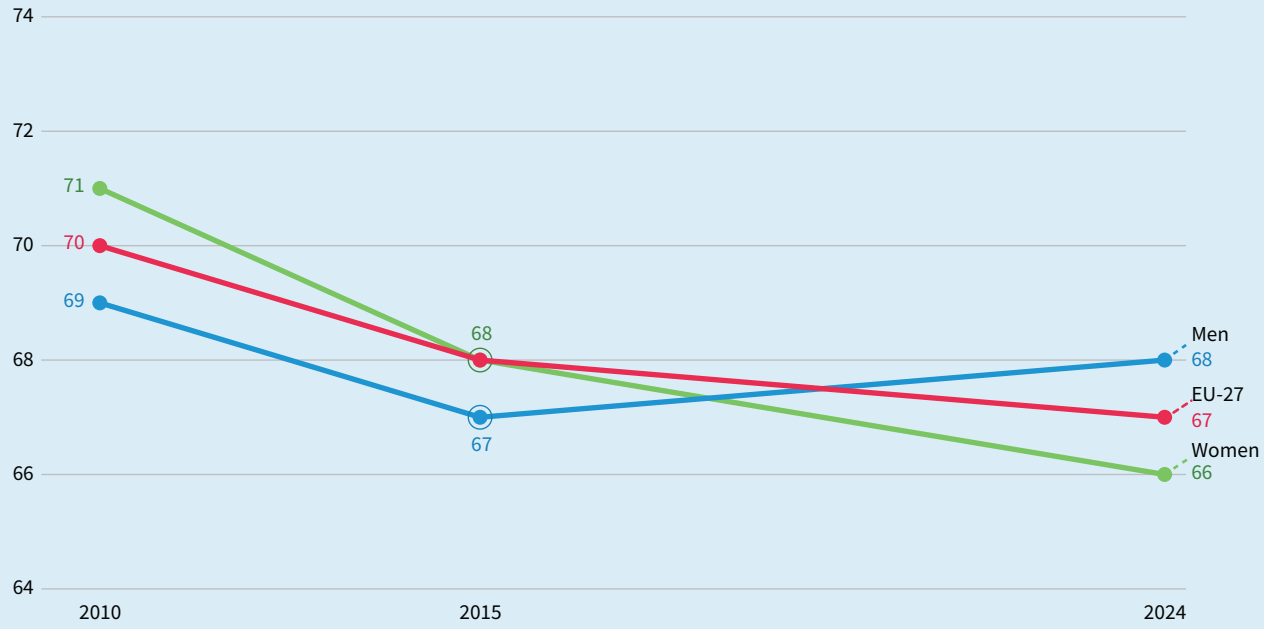
Table 4: Work intensity indicators

Sub-dimension	Item
Quantitative demands	Work at high speed
	Work to tight deadlines
	Not enough time to do the job
	Frequent and disruptive interruptions
Interdependency	Interdependency: three or more pace determinants
Emotional demands	Hiding your feelings at work
	Handling angry clients
	Being in emotionally disturbing situations

Progress over time

The score for work intensity has decreased slightly over the last three survey editions, indicating an intensification of work (Figure 13). Where previously men were somewhat more likely to report higher levels of work intensity, in 2024 it was women (lower scores on this index being less favourable).

Figure 13: Work intensity index (0–100), by gender, 2010–2024, EU-27



Work intensity across sectors

The transport sector has the highest proportion of workers who report working to tight deadlines and at high speed around three-quarters of the time or more often. When it comes to other quantitative demands, workers in the education sector are most likely to report never or rarely having enough time to get the job done, whereas frequent disruptive interruptions are more prevalent in the healthcare sector (Figure 14).

Having three or more pace determinants is more pronounced in industry, where the main determinant of work pace is the speed of automatic systems or machines.

Other sectors with a high proportion of workers reporting three or more pace determinants include financial services and commerce and hospitality.

The healthcare sector exhibits the highest levels of emotional demands, largely due to the frequent interactions with the public. To recall, this is also the sector that stands out as having the highest percentage of workers subjected to most forms of adverse social behaviour. Healthcare workers are also more likely to report hiding their feelings, dealing with angry clients and being in emotionally disturbing situations.

Figure 14: Work intensity aspects by sector, EU-27 (%)

Sector	Working at high speed (3/4 of time +)	Working to tight deadlines (3/4 of time +)	Three or more pace determinants	Enough time to do the job (rarely/never)	Hide emotions (most or all of the time)	Handling angry clients (3/4 of time +)	Emotionally disturbing situations (3/4 of time +)	Frequent (very or fairly often) and disruptive interruptions
Agriculture	23	20	19	9	10	2	4	9
Commerce and hospitality	42	35	39	9	29	19	7	17
Construction	35	33	33	8	15	8	5	14
Education	23	25	22	12	30	22	14	21
Financial services	32	34	40	8	29	18	6	25
Health	38	37	26	11	39	28	29	29
Industry	37	37	41	10	16	8	7	17
Other services	33	34	28	9	22	12	7	18
Public administration	24	28	30	9	34	16	12	20
Transport	43	46	32	9	25	14	10	13
EU-27	**35**	**34**	**32**	**10**	**25**	**15**	**10**	**19**

Note: *In this heat map, each column represents the percentage of workers in each sector exposed to different work intensity components, with the EU average used as a non-colour-coded reference. Under each column, red indicates significantly above-average exposure, orange reflects moderately above or near-average levels, yellow represents exposure close to the EU average, and green denotes below-average exposure.*

Work intensity through a gender lens

In terms of quantitative demands, women are more likely than men to work at high speed for three quarters of the time or more and experience frequent and disruptive interruptions. Only a marginally higher proportion of women than men report rarely or never having enough time to do their job (Figure 15). Consistent with previous survey editions, women face higher emotional demands at work compared to men, which is partly due to their overrepresentation in customer-facing professions such as healthcare and education, where there is more interaction with the public.

Skills and discretion

Key findings

- **Overall trend: Since 2010, workers have more opportunities to use and develop their skills. A gender gap persists – with men scoring higher in the 'Skills and discretion index' – but it has narrowed slightly over the past decade.**
- Despite overall positive developments, fewer than half of all workers (44 %) report having enough opportunities to use their skills and knowledge in their work.
- Inequalities in access to training remain in occupational and age groups: workers in higher-skilled occupations report more frequent, paid training opportunities; and older workers (aged 55 or more) report less access to training than their younger colleagues.
- Sectors with the highest rates of training (health, public administration, financial services) also report the highest unmet training needs.
- While skills use, development opportunities and access to training have improved, there has been a concerning decrease in workers' ability to influence collective work processes and apply their own ideas.

Figure 15: Work intensity aspects by gender, EU-27 (%)

Gender	Working at high speed (3/4 of time +)	Working to tight deadlines (3/4 of time +)	Three or more pace determinants	Enough time to do the job (rarely/never)	Hide emotions (most or all of the time)	Handling angry clients (3/4 of time +)	Emotionally disturbing situations (3/4 of time +)	Frequent (very or fairly often) and disruptive interruptions
Men	33	34	34	9	22	12	8	16
Women	36	34	31	10	29	18	13	22

- Worker participation in organisational development varies significantly by sector. Employees in financial services, education and public administration are more likely to be consulted on improving work processes while employees in agriculture, commerce and transport have fewer such opportunities.

Skills and discretion explained

The dimension of skills and discretion captures how workers develop and grow through their experience of work. This includes access to training, opportunities to use and develop skills required in a job, the autonomy given to workers and participation in organisational developments that allow them to feed back their knowledge of work to the company or organisation. A key dimension of human-centred work is the ability of workers to influence their work processes. Skills and discretion have a strong impact on workers' health and well-being. A highly skilled workforce, consisting of people who can apply their skills, is also a key component of EU competitiveness.

Skills and discretion index

The Skills and discretion index consists of four sub-dimensions: training, cognitive dimensions that support learning on the job, the decision latitude given to workers and organisational participation in the workplace. The index is measured on a scale from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating better outcomes. It comprises the indicators listed in Table 5.

Progress over time

The Skills and discretion index shows clear improvements since 2010 (Figure 16). Men continue to achieve higher scores than women but by 2024 the gender gap had been reduced.

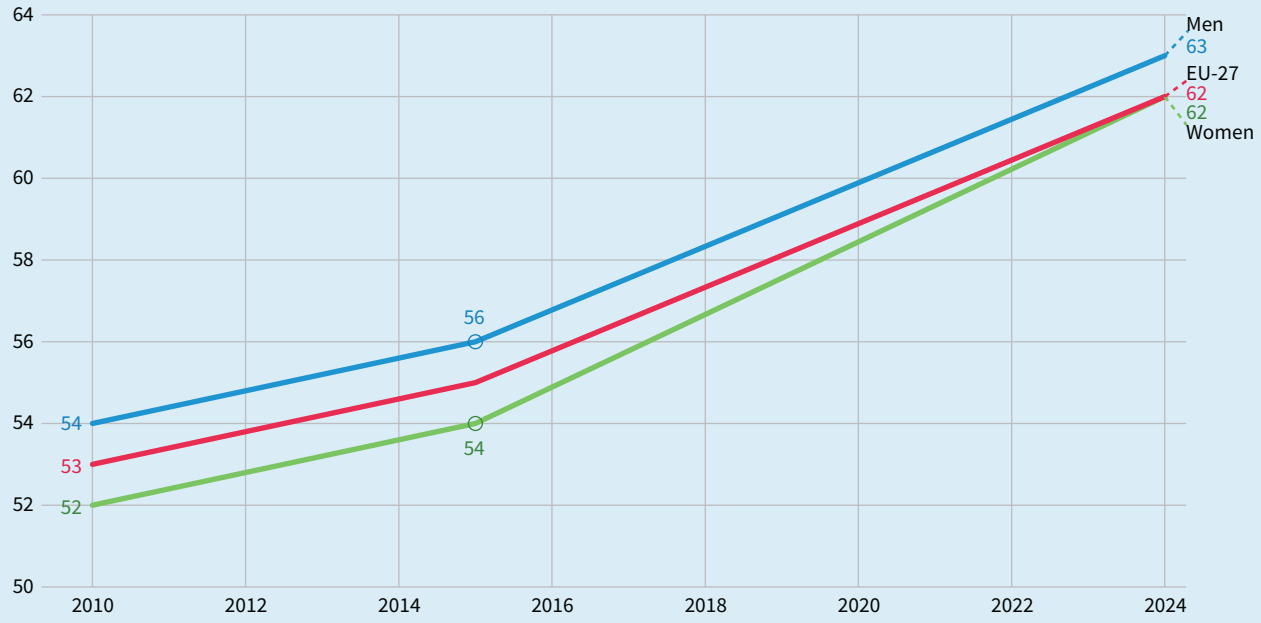
Table 5: Skills and discretion indicators

Sub-dimension	Item
Cognitive dimensions and possibilities for development	Solving unforeseen problems
	Carrying out complex tasks
	Learning new things
	Ability to apply your own ideas in work ('sometimes', 'most of the time' and 'always')
	Working with computers, smartphones and laptops, etc. (at least a quarter of the time)
	I have enough opportunities to use my skills and knowledge in my work
	Speak foreign languages at work
	Make difficult decisions
Decision latitude	Ability to choose or change order of tasks*
	Ability to choose or change methods of work*
	Ability to choose or change speed or rate of work*
	Having a say in choice of work colleagues
Organisational participation	Consulted before objectives are set for own work (always or most of the time)
	Involved in improving the work organisation or work processes of own department or organisation (always or most of the time)
	Ability to influence decisions that are important for your work (always or most of the time)
Training	Training paid for or provided by the employer over the past 12 months
	On-the-job training over the past 12 months

Notes: *Items in blue were added to the index in 2024 and are not included in the 'slim' index used for measuring trends over time. * Not comparable over time due to a change in the answer scale.*

These improvements hide some concerning developments for a number of items. While the use of skills, opportunities to develop skills and access to training have improved, the ability of workers to influence collective work processes

Figure 16: Skills and discretion index (0–100), by gender, 2010–2024, EU-27



through consultation, their involvement in measures that support the improvement of work processes and their ability to apply their own ideas in their work have decreased for both men and women.

Training

The survey captures training paid for or provided by employers over the previous 12 months, training paid for by a self-employed person for themselves, and on-the-job training. Close to half of employees (48 %) and 31 % of self-employed people (who paid for it themselves) had training in the previous year. On-the-job training remains widespread: 46 % of workers could avail of it. Despite progress over time, 11 % of employees (same proportion of men and women) report having asked for training but not having been granted it.

Access to training has been increasing over time but inequalities remain in occupational and age groups.

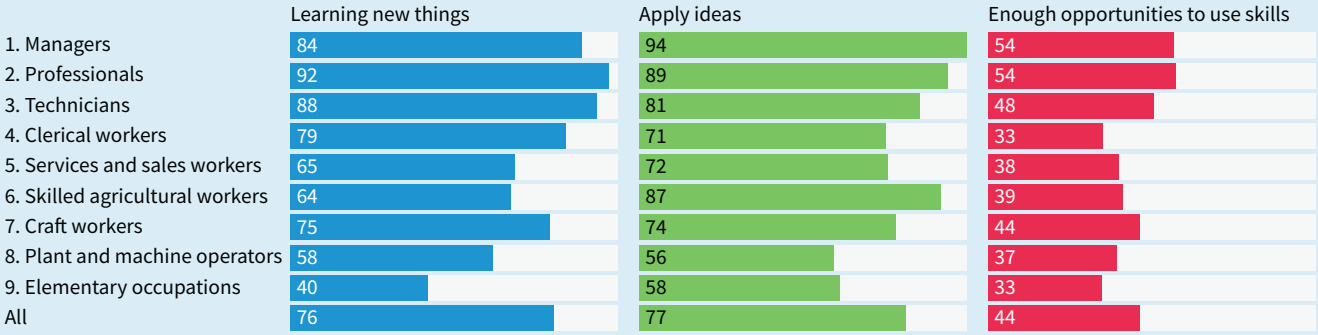
Clerical workers, professionals and managers report more frequently receiving training paid for by their employer. Older workers (aged 55 or more) report less access to training than their younger colleagues.

Differences also exist with regard to sectors. Around 6 out of 10 employees received training paid for by their employer in health (57 %), public administration (63 %) and financial services (64 %). Interestingly, unmet training needs are also highest in health, public administration and financial services – at 16 % in all three sectors.

Cognitive demands at work

This sub-dimension measures how workers are being challenged in their tasks and how they can develop their skills while working. While, overall, 76 % of workers report opportunities to learn new things, only 44 % of workers report having enough opportunities to use their skills and knowledge in their work (Figure 17).

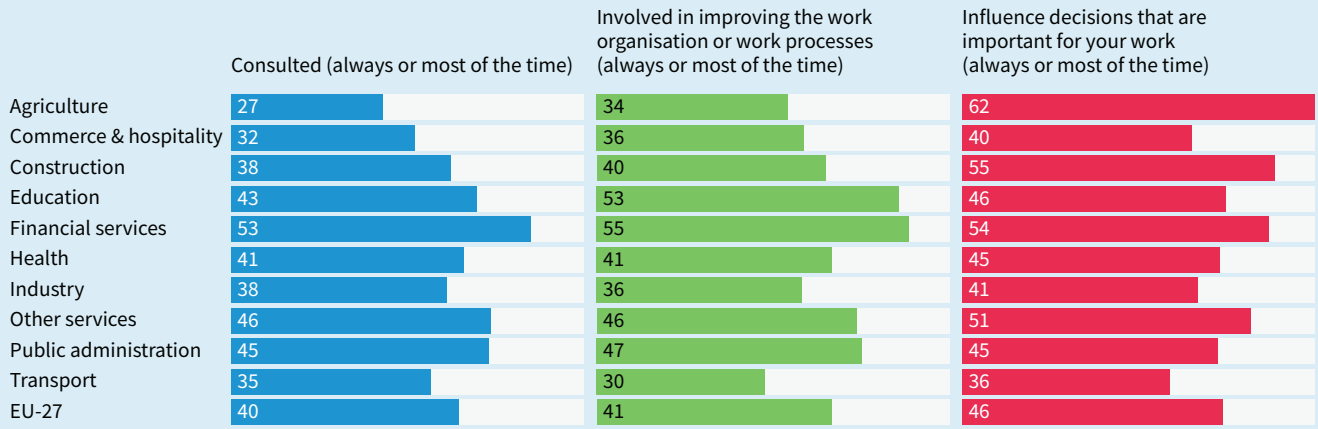
Figure 17: Opportunities to use and develop skills at work, by occupation, selected items, EU-27 (%)



Organisational participation

There are important differences between sectors in this sub-dimension. More than 50 % of employees in financial services report being consulted and involved in improving the work organisation or work processes ('always' or 'most of the time'). In contrast, fewer than 30% of employees in agriculture are consulted and only 30% of employees in transport are involved in improving the work organisation or work processes. As regards the opportunity to influence decisions that are important for their work, around half of employees in agriculture, construction, financial services and other services report being able to do so 'always' or 'most of the time'. This opportunity is least frequent for employees in transport (Figure 18).

Figure 18: Organisational participation by sector, EU-27 (%)



Prospects

Key findings

- **Overall trend: More workers feel their job offers good career prospects. The EWCS 2024 reveals that, since 2010, there has been a 15 percentage point increase for both men (49 %) and women (43 %). However, over this period, a gender gap of 6 percentage points has persisted.**
- Higher-skilled occupations like managers, professionals and technicians report the best prospects, while elementary workers (e.g. cleaners, labourers, food preparation assistants) and skilled agricultural workers report the lowest.
- Fear of job loss is relatively low overall (affecting 12 % of women and 10 % of men) and less prevalent in the EWCS 2024 than in previous editions. Younger workers and elementary workers experience highest job insecurity (15 %).
- Uncertainty about the future is reflected in workers' fear of an undesirable change in their work situation without losing their job: 15 % of men and women are expecting this kind of change, with higher levels reported by workers in the agriculture, health and transport sectors.

Prospects explained

The prospects dimension is a key determinant of workers' health as it addresses the need that workers have for security and control regarding their future. Prospects also matter for families and communities. For example, family formation and fertility are negatively impacted by poor employment prospects. Prospects matter for public finances as well, as social protection systems address the risks associated with poor prospects, such as unemployment or early retirement. From the company's perspective, providing good prospects reflects its investment in the development of its workforce, which in turn is linked to economic performance.

Prospects index

The Prospects index consists of sub-dimensions covering career prospects, job security, working conditions prospects and the employment status of workers (the latter is relevant for access to social protection). It is measured on a scale from 0 to 100, with higher values indicating better prospects. It comprises the indicators listed in Table 6.

Table 6: Prospects indicators

Sub-dimension	Item
Employment status	Self-employed with employees
	Solo self-employed
	Economically dependent self-employed
	Employees permanent contract
	Employees temporary contract
	Employees other or no contract
Career prospects	Job offers good prospects for career advancement
Job security	Might lose my job in the next 6 months
	Expecting an undesirable change in work
	Change in employment in the workplace*
Working conditions prospects	Afraid to ask for better working conditions

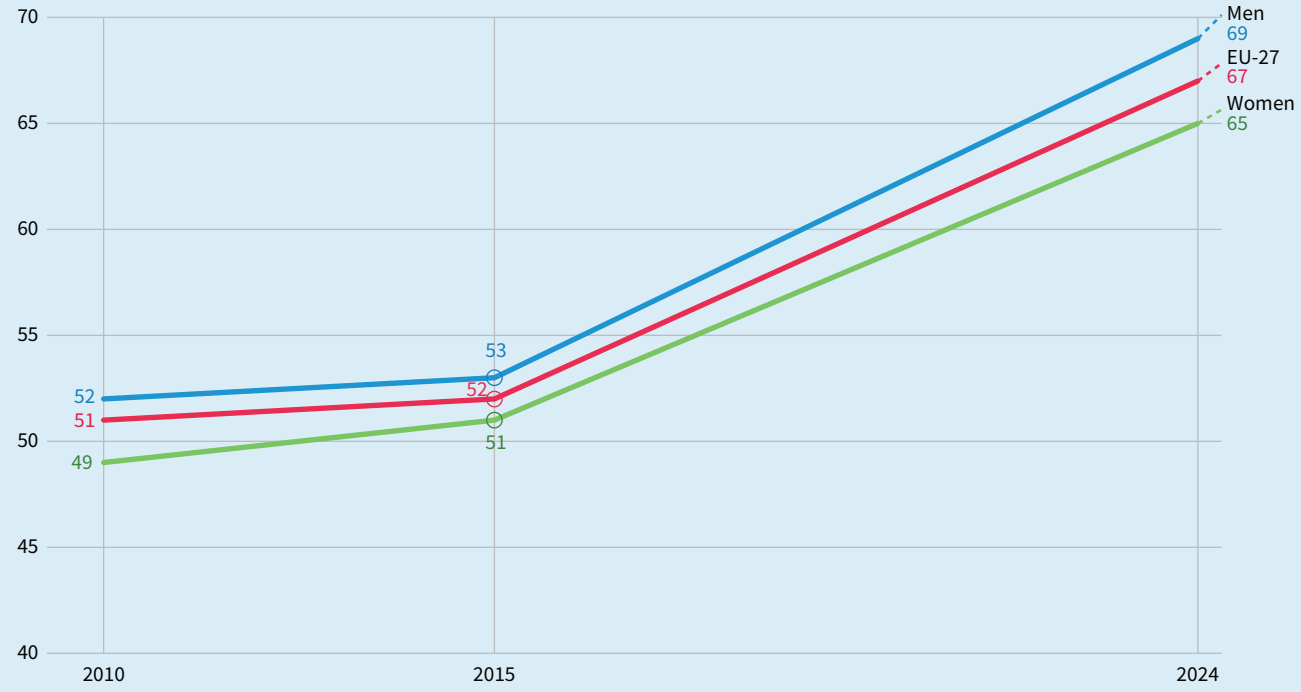
Notes: *Items in blue were added to the index in 2024 and are not included in the 'slim' index used for measuring trends over time.*
** No data were available for 2010.*

Progress over time

Two of the items in the Prospects index that can be used to examine trends over time are career prospects and job security (which addresses fear of job loss).

In the context of a much-improved labour market, the Prospects index has improved significantly since 2010 for both men and women. However, the gender gap has increased since 2015 (Figure 19).

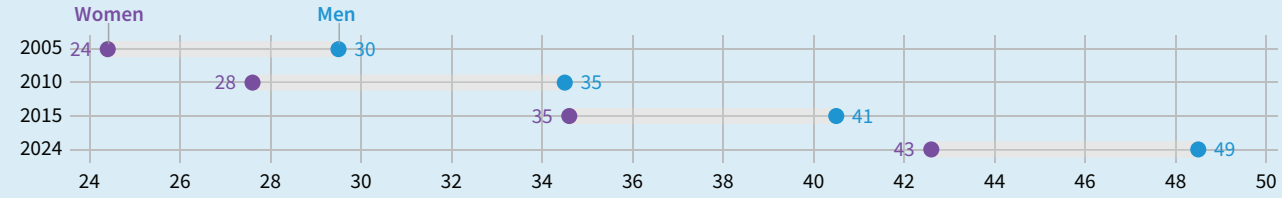
Figure 19: Prospects index (0–100), by gender, 2010–2024, EU-27



Career prospects

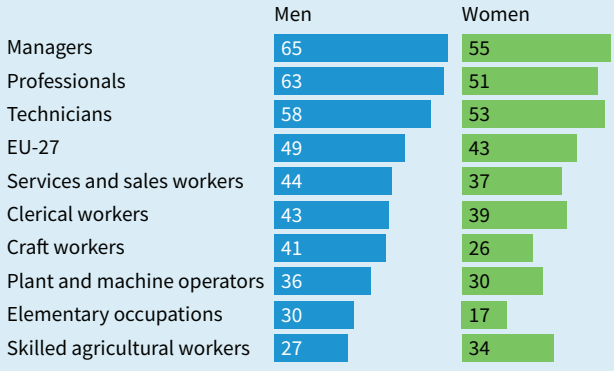
In 2024, 49 % of male workers and 43 % of female workers (strongly) tended to agree that their job offers good prospects for career advancement. This constitutes a 15 percentage point increase since 2010 for both men and women, with the gender gap remaining at 6 percentage points (Figure 20).

Figure 20: Good career prospects by gender, 2005–2024, EU-27



There are important differences by occupation, with better career prospects reported by those in higher-skilled occupations: 61 % of managers and 56 % of professionals and technicians report good career prospects. However, this is the case for only 23 % of elementary workers. Prospects are highest for workers in finance (63 %) and public administration (56 %) and lowest in agriculture (32 %), education (36 %) and transport (40 %). Figure 21 shows the breakdown by occupation and gender.

Figure 21: Good career prospects by occupation and gender, EU-27 (%)



Job security

Some 12 % of women and 10 % of men fear losing their job in the next 6 months. Younger workers (15 %), and elementary workers (15 %) experience highest job insecurity when compared with other age groups or occupations.

Another aspect of the job security sub-dimension is the fear of an undesirable change in one's work situation without losing one's job: 15 % of men and women report that they are expecting this kind of change. Looking at both aspects of job security – fear of job loss and work insecurity – different profiles emerge. Sectors such as financial services and public administration experience high work insecurity but the fear of job loss is low. Workers in health and transport, on the other hand, report both fear of job loss and work insecurity (Figure 22).

Figure 22: Job security by sector, EU-27 (%)

Earnings

Key findings

- **In 16 out of the 35 countries included in the 2024 survey, fewer than half of all workers are sure of how much they will earn over the next three months.**
- A majority of workers (85 %) can predict their earnings for the next three months, either accurately or approximately.
- 15 % of workers cannot predict their earnings at all. This uncertainty is more common among men (17 %) than women (13 %), and is especially prominent among young workers under the age of 24 (26 % of young men and 21 % of young women).
- Earnings predictability varies significantly by country, with countries like Austria and Germany having a high level of certainty, while Romania and Greece have a high level of uncertainty (more than a quarter report not knowing how much they will earn in the next three months).
- Unpredictability is highest for self-employed workers, those with non-permanent contracts and workers in agriculture (49 %) and construction (25 %).
- The percentage of workers who feel they are not paid appropriately has been decreasing since 2005. However, a gender gap persists: in 2024, more female workers (30 %) than male workers (24 %) felt an effort–reward imbalance.

Earnings explained

In addition to the non-material features of jobs, monetary rewards are also a crucial element of job quality. Earnings from work – a salary for employees and profit for self-employed people – provide a means to make a livelihood and support a person's lifestyle and family, as well as also potentially being a motivation to work.

It has been widely established that financial insecurity has a negative effect on physical and mental health. Workers facing financial insecurity are more likely to report depressive symptoms, higher levels of absenteeism, poorer innovative behaviours, stress and work-to-family conflict. The EU Directive on Transparent and Predictable Working Conditions acknowledges the importance of financial security by requiring employers to provide workers with information about essential aspects such as the amount of basic remuneration, additional components, and the frequency and method of payment.

Earnings index

The Earnings index comprises the indicators listed in Table 7.

Table 7: Earnings indicators

Sub-dimension	Item
Monetary	Net monthly earnings
Predictability	Can tell in advance how much is going to be earned in the next three months
Effort–reward (im)balance	Get paid appropriately considering all efforts and achievements in the job

Measuring earnings from work in the European Working Conditions Survey

The EWCS includes a series of questions on earnings. The main question focuses on the net monthly earnings from a person's main paid job, referring to their average earnings in recent months. For respondents who are unable to give an exact figure of their monthly net earnings, a range of earnings bands are presented from which they are asked to choose. Typically, survey respondents are not very open in disclosing their earnings (around 17 % of respondents to the EWCS 2024 refused to provide such information), which may compromise the robustness of the indicator. Calculating a standardised index entails several complex steps, which are being taken at the time of writing. The following first findings will focus on the predictability of earnings and the efforts–reward imbalance.

Predictability of earnings

The 2024 survey asked workers if they can tell in advance how much they are going to earn in the next three months. The majority – 6 out of every 10 – replied that they can tell quite accurately in advance how much they will earn. A further 25 % said they can predict their earnings in advance

but only approximately. The remaining 15 % replied that they cannot tell how much they will earn. Uncertainty about earnings is reported by relatively more male workers (17 %) than their female counterparts (13 %) and is particularly prominent among young male workers: 26 % and 21 % of male and female workers, respectively, under the age of 24 report that they cannot tell how much they will earn in the upcoming months.

As shown in Figure 23, earnings uncertainty varies greatly across countries. In countries such as Austria, Germany and Switzerland, the vast majority of workers (more than 70 %) know quite accurately how much they will earn in the coming months and fewer than 10 % report uncertainty. On the other hand, in countries such as Romania, Greece and Albania, more than 25 % of workers report not knowing how much they will earn, and less than half know accurately how much they are going to earn.

Unpredictability of earnings from work is greater for self-employed workers, especially if they are own-account workers, and also for employees with non-permanent types of employment contract or no contract at all. In contrast, only a relatively small share of employees with indefinite (permanent) contracts report not knowing how much they are going to earn. Unpredictability of earnings is more prominent among workers in agriculture (49 %) and construction (25 %), and less so in education (6 %) and public administration (4 %).

Fair pay: Effort–reward imbalance

The absolute level of earnings from work are of great importance for workers but so too is the extent to which monetary rewards are perceived to be fair. Important detrimental implications for health (including stress and increased risk of physical and mental health problems) occur if workers do not perceive that the level of rewards (comprising earnings from work, recognition and career advancement) is proportional to the efforts they devote to work – designated as effort–reward imbalance.

Figure 23: Predictability of earnings over the next three months, by country (%)

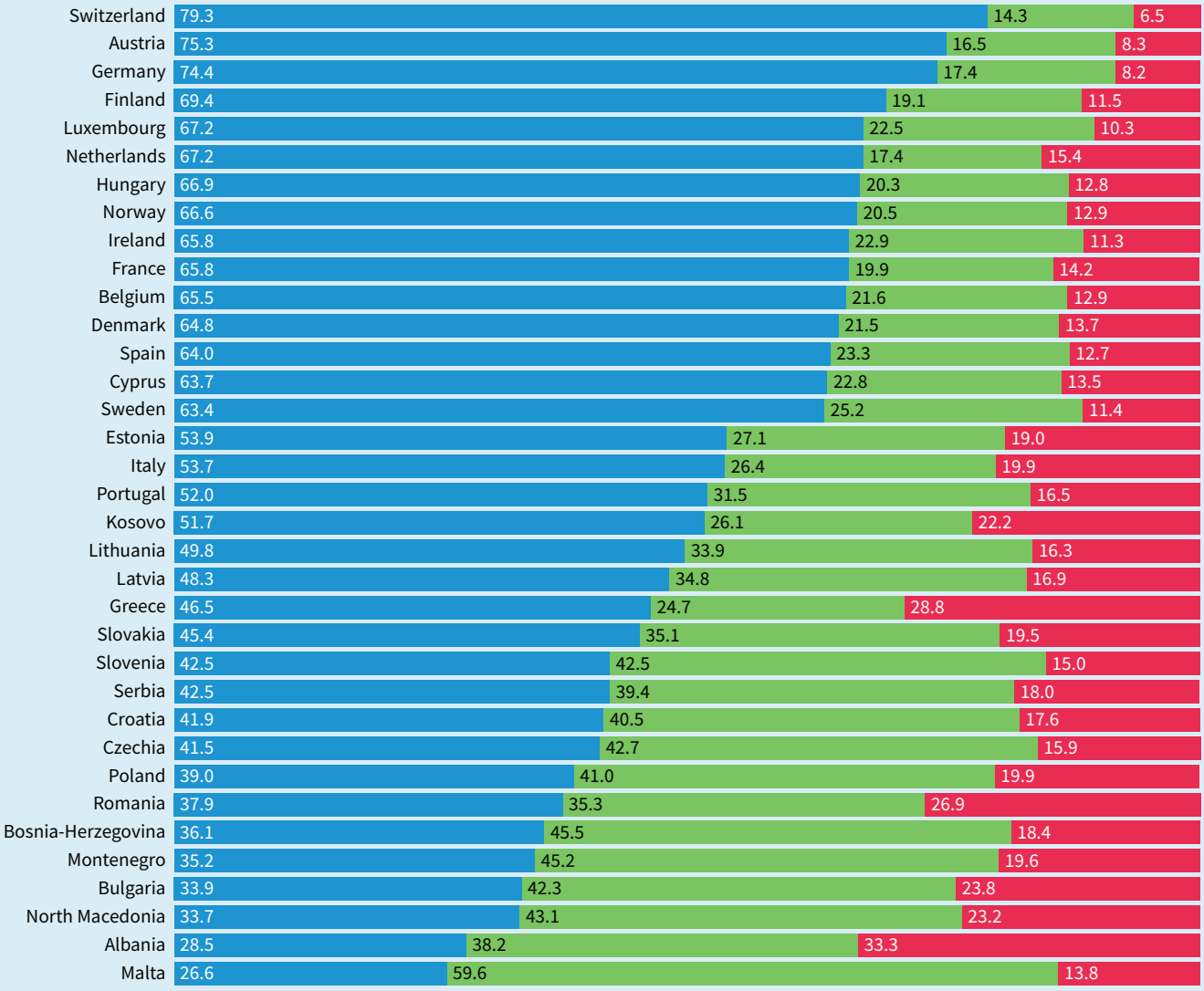
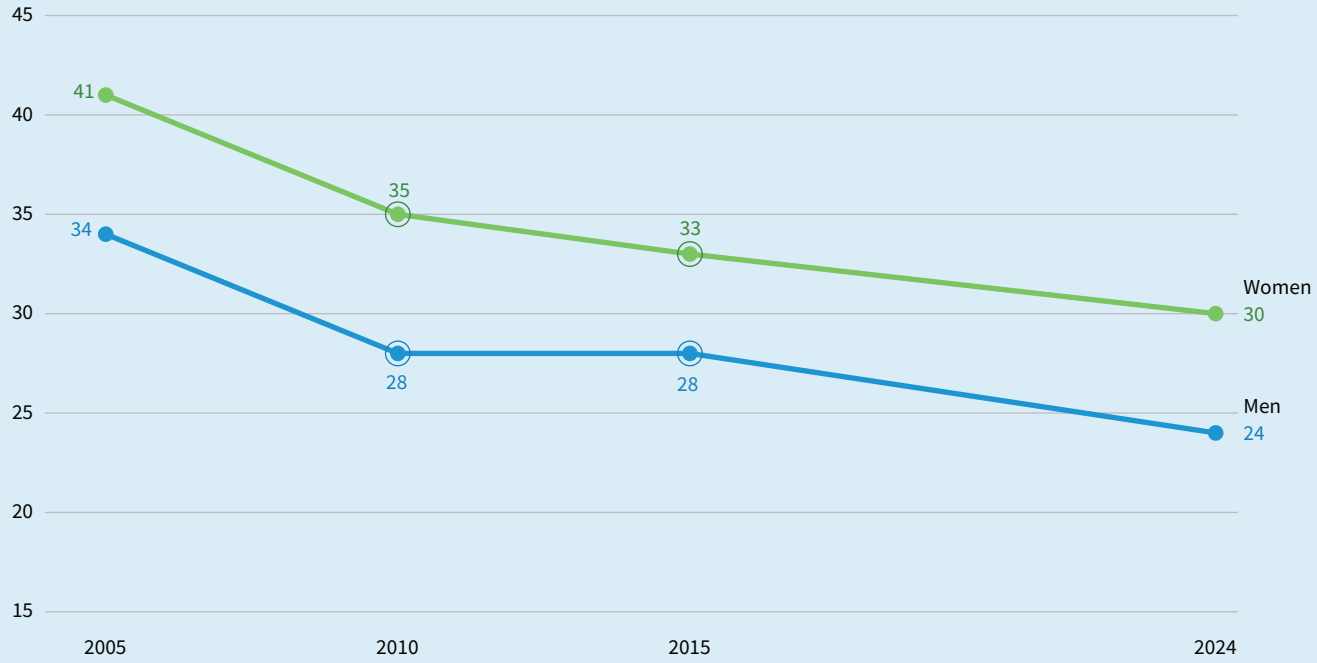


Figure 24 shows that the shares of female and male workers disagreeing that they feel they get appropriately paid have been decreasing since 2005. However, the gender gap, with a larger share of female workers disagreeing that they are paid appropriately, persists: in 2024, 30 % of female workers and 24 % of male workers reported an effort–reward imbalance.

Figure 24: Share of workers reporting effort–reward imbalance, by gender, 2005–2024, EU-27 (%)



Note: *Percentage of workers who 'Tend to disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' with the statement: 'Considering all your efforts and achievements in your job, you feel you get paid appropriately'.*

A new world of work – challenges and opportunities

The EWCS is a valuable tool for monitoring trends in the development of job quality. The survey also includes questions that capture changes in the way workers perform their work, the implications for work and for life outside of work, and whether or not workers' expectations from work are met in terms of preferences and values.

The digital workplace

The use of digital technologies in the workplace is reshaping job quality in multiple ways. Digital technologies support telework and remote collaboration; enable the growing use of algorithmic management; and increasingly automate cognitive tasks through the use of generative AI tools. Such changes typically begin at the task level and are expected to gradually influence the broader nature of work and overall job quality over time.

Key findings

- **While only 3 % of employees in the EU-27 telework on a full-time basis, larger shares are engaged in regular telework, also known as 'hybrid work' (9 %) or occasional telework (16 %).**
- Despite the considerable hype surrounding generative AI, only 12 % of workers report using AI tools in their job. However, there are significant disparities at country level, with the rate of usage ranging from a high of more than 20 % in some countries to less than 5 % in others.
- The impact of technology appears to be more positive than is commonly perceived. The data show that technology creates more tasks than it removes and facilitates increased interaction among workers.

The EWCS includes questions on the use of specific technologies by workers in their main job. In addition to the question about the use of information and communication technology (ICT) devices – such as laptops, smartphones and computers – the EWCS 2024 also explored workers' use of other technologies. These included wearables, collaborative robots, electronic workspaces or collaboration platforms, tools for online meetings and teleconferences, and generative AI tools. A new set of questions was introduced to assess the prevalence of algorithmic management practices in European workplaces. These focused on the extent to which computer programmes are used to assign tasks, schedule work and monitor employee performance. Respondents who reported using at least one type of technology in their main job were also asked whether these technologies had removed or created tasks or facilitated greater interaction with colleagues.

Developments in telework

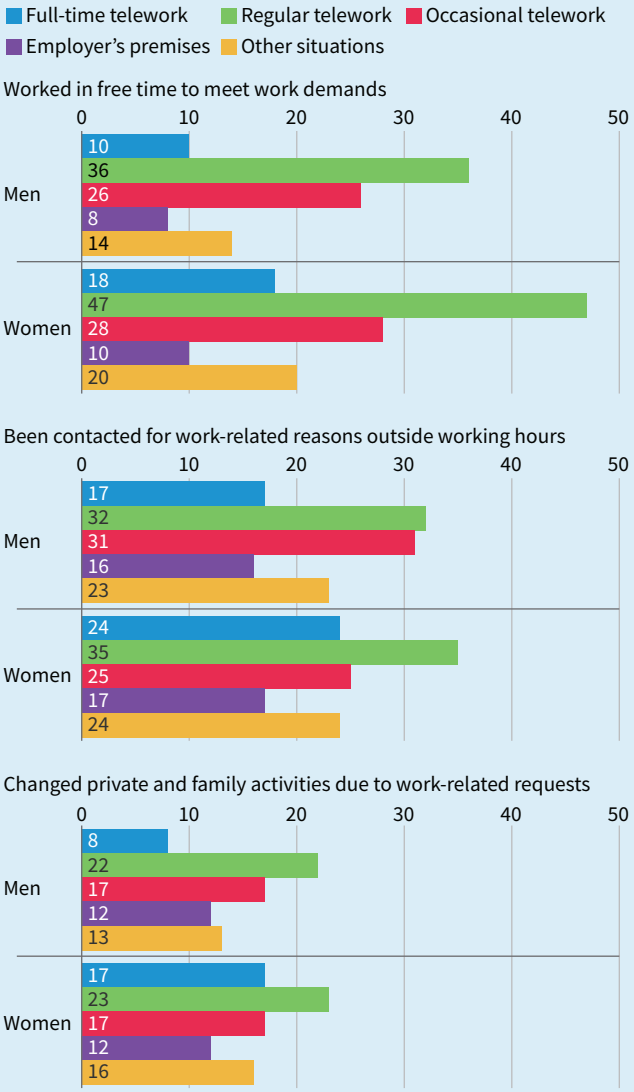
Eurofound defines telework as a work arrangement in which work is performed outside a default place of work, normally the employer's premises, by means of ICT. The characteristic features of telework are the use of computers and telecommunications to change the usual location of work, the frequency with which the worker is working outside the employer's premises and the number of places where workers work remotely (mobility) (Eurofound, 2022a). Using this definition, employees can be grouped into various categories of teleworkers, including those listed below.

- **Full-time telework:** Employees who use ICT at least half of the time, always work from home, and sometimes, rarely or never from the employer's premises; or who often work from home and rarely or never from the employer's premises. They represent 3 % of all employees in the EU-27.
- **Regular telework:** Employees who use ICT at least half of the time, work always from home and always or often from the employer's premises; or work often from home and always, often or sometimes from the employer's premises. This form of telework, which corresponds to what has been popularised as 'hybrid work', is carried out by around 9 % of employees in the EU-27.
- **Occasional telework:** Employees who use ICT at least half of the time and work sometimes or rarely from home. This group makes up approximately 16 % of employees.

The total prevalence of telework is similar for women (28 %) and men (27 %) but it is higher for employees aged between 30 and 54 (31 %) than for those in other age groups (16–29 years: 20 %; 55–64 years: 26 %; 65+ years: 24 %). Teleworking is more common among managers (60 %), professionals (57 %) and technicians (40 %) and in sectors such as financial services (61 %), education (49 %) and other services (43 %).

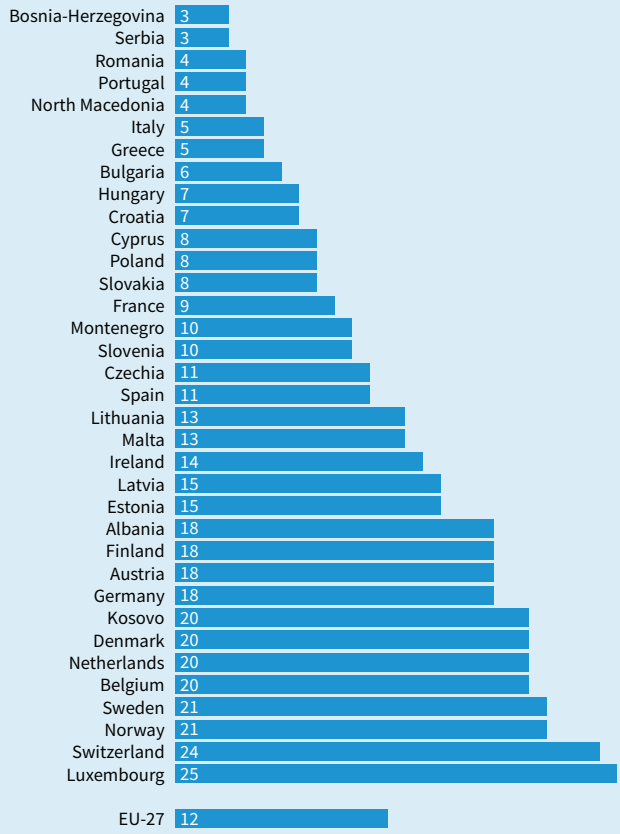
Despite the many potential benefits of remote working for employees, including better work–life balance and more autonomy over when and where to carry out certain tasks, the EWCS 2024 data show that regular telework (hybrid work) and occasional telework is accompanied by a blurring of boundaries between work and private life. Those carrying out regular (hybrid work) and occasional telework are more likely to work during their free time to meet work demands, to be contacted outside of working hours for work-related reasons and, in a small number of cases, to change private and family activities to accommodate work-related requests. While the differences between men and women are generally minimal or none, it is worth noting that the blurring of boundaries between work and private life are more prominent for women who regularly telework (hybrid work); in particular, they work in their free time to meet work demands (Figure 25).

Figure 25: Blurring of boundaries with regular telework/hybrid work, by gender, EU-27 (%)



Note: *This chart presents the sum of percentages of employees who replied 'several times a month', 'several times a week' or 'daily' to each item: worked in free time to meet work demands; been contacted for work-related reasons outside working hours; and changed private and family activities due to work-related requests.*

Figure 26: Use of generative AI tools, by country (%)



Note: *Percentage of workers replying 'yes' to the question: 'And do you use the following equipment in your work? Artificial intelligence that simplifies complex mental tasks or makes recommendations on how you should be working? (ChatGPT, LLAMA, DALL-E, Midjourney, Jasper)'.*

Disparities in the use of generative AI

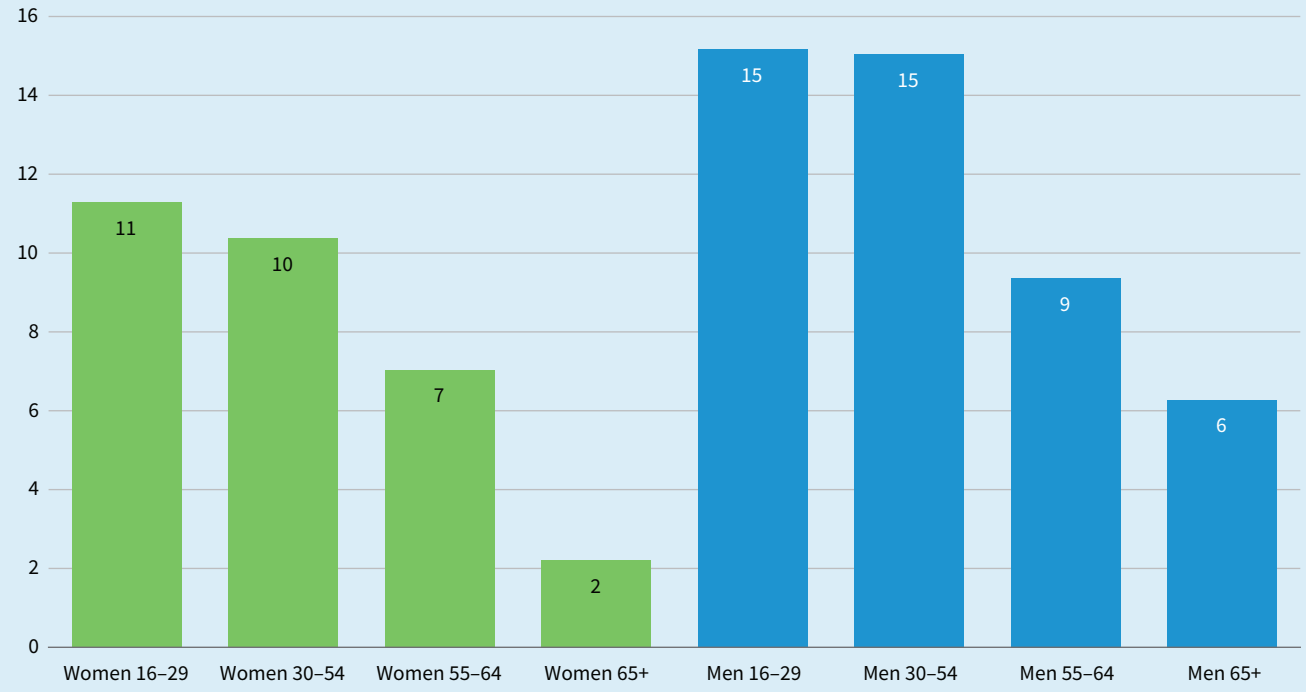
Despite the increasing hype surrounding generative AI, the survey data show that the use of such tools by workers remains relatively low, with only 12 % of workers reporting that they use them. However, there are large differences in prevalence rates across countries: at least one in five workers report using generative AI tools in their work in countries such as Luxembourg, Sweden, Belgium, the Netherlands and Denmark (which have a greater presence of knowledge-intensive sectors); other countries, such as Greece, Italy, Portugal and Romania, have much lower rates (5 % or lower) (Figure 26).

Generative AI tools are also more likely to be used by men and workers in younger age categories (Figure 27). Younger workers often exhibit greater familiarity with emerging technologies, including generative AI, due to growing up in a digital environment.

Prevalence of algorithmic management practices

The three forms of algorithmic management captured in the survey are not that widespread in European workplaces. Some 17 % of workers report that a computer programme monitors their work performance to a large or some extent, while 16 % report that a computer programme is used to allocate their work tasks. A lower share of workers (10 %) report that a computer programme determines when they have to work to a large or some extent. In terms of sector, the use of a computer programme to a large or some extent for work task allocation and performance monitoring is most prevalent in financial services, at 34 % and 35 %, respectively, whereas automated scheduling of work is most

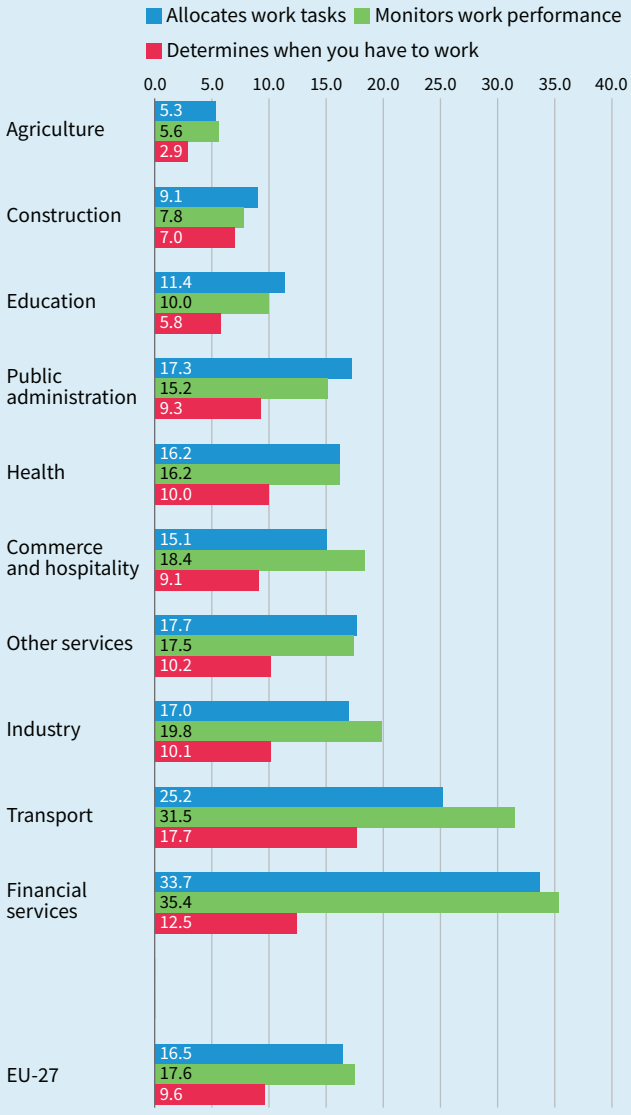
Figure 27: Use of generative AI tools, by gender and age group, EU-27 (%)



common in the transport sector (18 %). This is also a sector with a higher-than-average proportion of workers reporting automated task allocation and performance monitoring to a large or some extent (Figure 28).

Among the 26 % of respondents who reported that some elements of their work are decided by a computer programme, just over half (15 %) stated that there is a clear procedure to raise issues in the event of a disagreement with automated decisions.

Figure 28: Use of algorithmic management forms to a large or some extent, by sector, EU-27 (%)

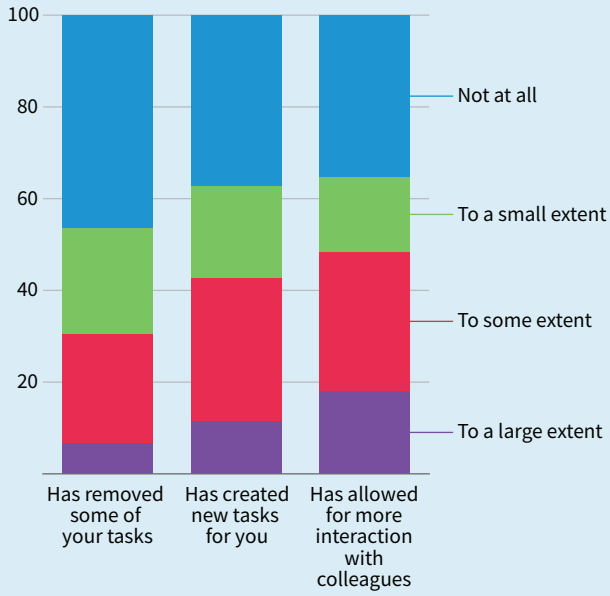


Impact of technology

Countering the narrative that technology may destroy tasks and eventually jobs, the data show that technology creates more tasks than it removes (Figure 29). Some 43 % of workers report that technology has created new tasks in their job to a large extent or to some extent, while 31 % say that technology has removed tasks in their job to a large extent or to some extent. Men are somewhat more likely than women to report the impact of technology to a large or some extent, both in terms of removing tasks (32 % of men versus 28 % of women) and creating new ones (44 % of men versus 41 % of women).

The data also contradict the common assumption that technology use leads to greater isolation or alienation at work. Instead, it shows that technology facilitates increased interaction among workers, with 48 % of respondents reporting this to a large and some extent.

Figure 29: Impact of technology on tasks, EU-27 (%)



Workers' health and well-being

Work has an impact on health, and this can be positive or negative. The relationships between work and health are numerous and bidirectional. The impact can be direct or indirect with immediate or delayed effects on health outcomes. At the same time, health is a key determinant of the ability to work and remain at work, an important consideration in the context of demographic ageing. Climate change brings new risks that could impact negatively on the health of workers. Concerns over mental health have grown in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, with psychosocial risks at work receiving more attention.

Key findings

- **The subjective well-being of workers continues the upward trajectory seen in previous editions of the survey. The average score in 2024 was 69.4 (out of 100), compared with 65.5 in 2010 and 68.7 in 2015.**
- Musculoskeletal problems are the most prevalent health issue reported by workers in the EU.
- A gender difference exists with regard to the reporting of health issues: women are more likely than men to report health issues, in particular when it comes to headaches or eyestrain (54 % for women and 41 % for men) and anxiety (26 % for women and 16 % for men).

- While almost two thirds of respondents (63 %) do not feel that work has an impact on their health, negative effects can be seen in certain sectors: transport, health, agriculture and industry are sectors where up to almost one third of workers report that work affects their health negatively.

Psychological well-being

Measuring subjective well-being is important because it is closely connected to both physical and mental health. The EWCS uses the World Health Organization-Five Well-Being Index (WHO-5), which assesses three key aspects: 'positive mood' (including good spirits and relaxation), 'vitality' (characterised by being active and waking up feeling fresh and rested), and 'general interest' (being interested in things). Results are measured on a scale from 0 to 100.

On average, the subjective well-being of workers in the EU in 2024 was 69.4 (out of 100 points). This has increased over successive editions of the survey (65.5 in 2010 and 68.7 in 2015).

Men score slightly higher than women (70.6 compared with 68.0). Younger and post-retirement age workers have the highest scores, while prime age and pre-retirement workers have the lowest scores. This U-shape of subjective well-being scores by age category is observed for both men and women.

Reported health problems

Musculoskeletal problems are the most prevalent health issue reported by workers in the EU. Workers in physically demanding occupations and workers engaged in manual work report a higher incidence of backache, muscular pains and physical exhaustion at the end of the day, while clerical workers, professionals and managers tend to report more instances of headaches, eyestrain, anxiety and sleeping problems. Services workers (e.g. hairdressers, waiters, guides) report an average incidence of all health problems (Figure 30).

Figure 30: Health problems, by occupation, EU-27 (%)

	Backache	Upper limb pain	Lower limb pain	Headaches/ eyestrain	Anxiety
Managers	42.2	46.9	27.0	45.2	21.5
Professionals	47.7	50.5	30.5	55.6	25.9
Technicians	49.6	50.8	35.4	49.9	21.9
Clerical workers	49.3	46.7	30.1	51.1	19.9
Services and sales workers	53.7	52.3	41.9	44.4	20.7
Skilled agricultural workers	61.6	60.6	56.4	31.7	16.4
Craft workers	58.3	59.5	48.5	39.6	13.4
Plant and machine operators	58.7	56.2	44.8	39.8	17.2
Elementary occupations	62.7	58.7	48.2	42.4	20.5
EU-27	**52.4**	**52.6**	**38.1**	**47.2**	**20.8**

	Physically exhausted at the end of the day	Emotionally drained by work	Sleeping difficulties (daily and several times a week)	Risk of major depression*	Risk of depression*
Managers	15.3	9.3	19.6	3.4	10.7
Professionals	17.0	12.9	20.9	4.3	10.7
Technicians	19.0	14.9	22.4	6.1	11.0
Clerical workers	15.4	10.6	22.1	3.6	11.9
Services and sales workers	22.7	14.5	21.5	4.2	10.6
Skilled agricultural workers	27.4	9.9	13.0	4.1	13.2
Craft workers	25.5	11.9	16.7	4.4	12.4
Plant and machine operators	22.0	14.8	18.3	4.7	11.3
Elementary occupations	22.9	13.6	21.6	6.6	11.6
EU-27	**20.0**	**13.0**	**20.4**	**4.7**	**11.2**

Notes: *The colour scheme in these heat maps illustrates how occupations compare to the EU average in reported health issues. Each column shows the percentage of workers in each occupation reporting health problems, with the EU average as a non-colour-coded reference. Red indicates significantly above-average reporting, orange represents moderately above or near-average levels, yellow reflects values close to the average, and green indicates below-average reporting. * These two items are measured using the WHO-5, which assesses 'positive mood', 'vitality' and 'general interest'. The index score ranges from 0 to 100. A high score is associated with a good level of psychological well-being while a low score indicates that the person is at risk of mental health problems, including depression.*

Women are also more likely than men to report health issues, with the largest gender differences in self-reported health problems for headaches or eyestrain (54 % for women and 41 % for men) and anxiety (26 % for women and 16 % for men).

Information about health and safety at work and the prevention of work-related stress

A large majority of workers are well informed about occupational safety and health (OSH) risks and the prevention of work-related stress. However, there is a greater level of information about the OSH risks (41 % are very well informed) (Figure 31a) compared with the prevention of work-related stress (26 %) (Figure 31b).

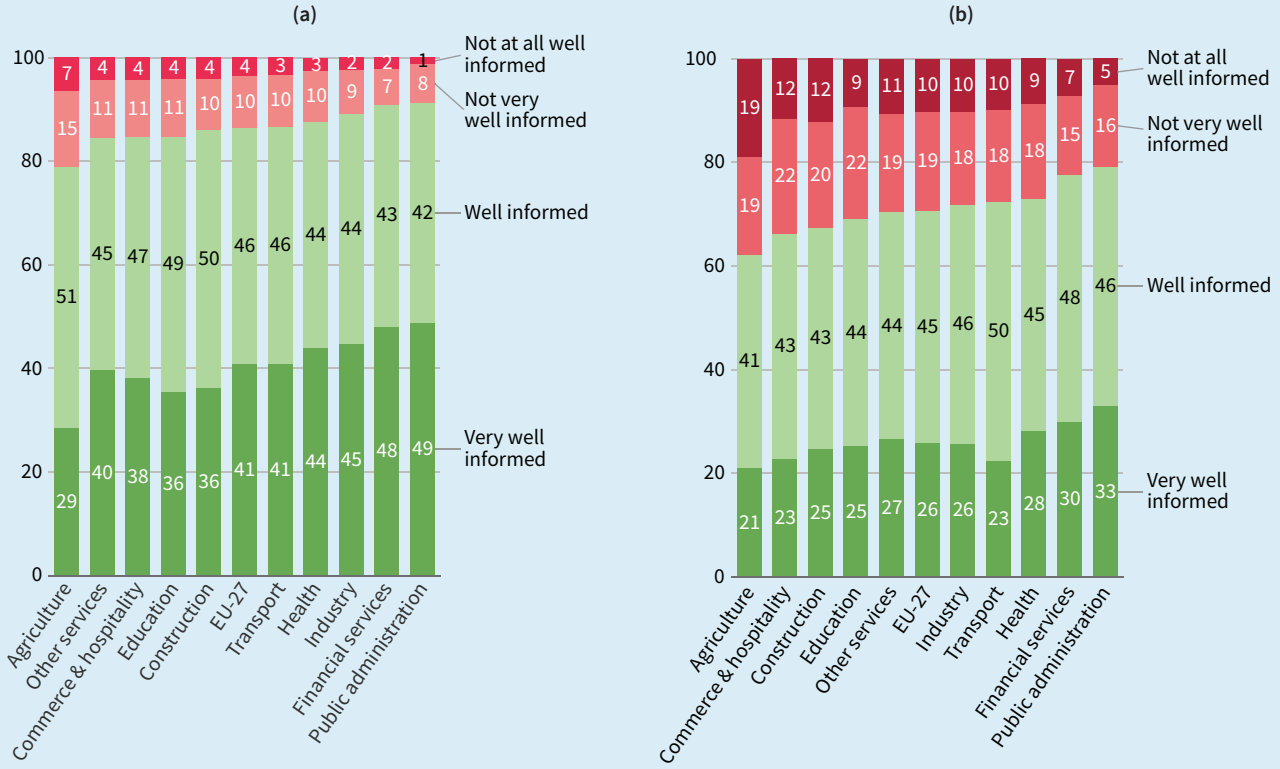
Women are somewhat more likely than men to report being under-informed about both risks (with a gender gap of between 2 and 4 percentage points). There are also important differences by sector.

Impact of work on health

Work can only be sustainable if it does not impact negatively on workers' health. The EWCS explores this aspect and workers are asked whether the effect of work on health is positive or negative.

The proportion of workers reporting a negative effect on health decreased slightly from 26.7 % in 2010 to 25.5 % in 2024. The proportion of workers who believe their work has

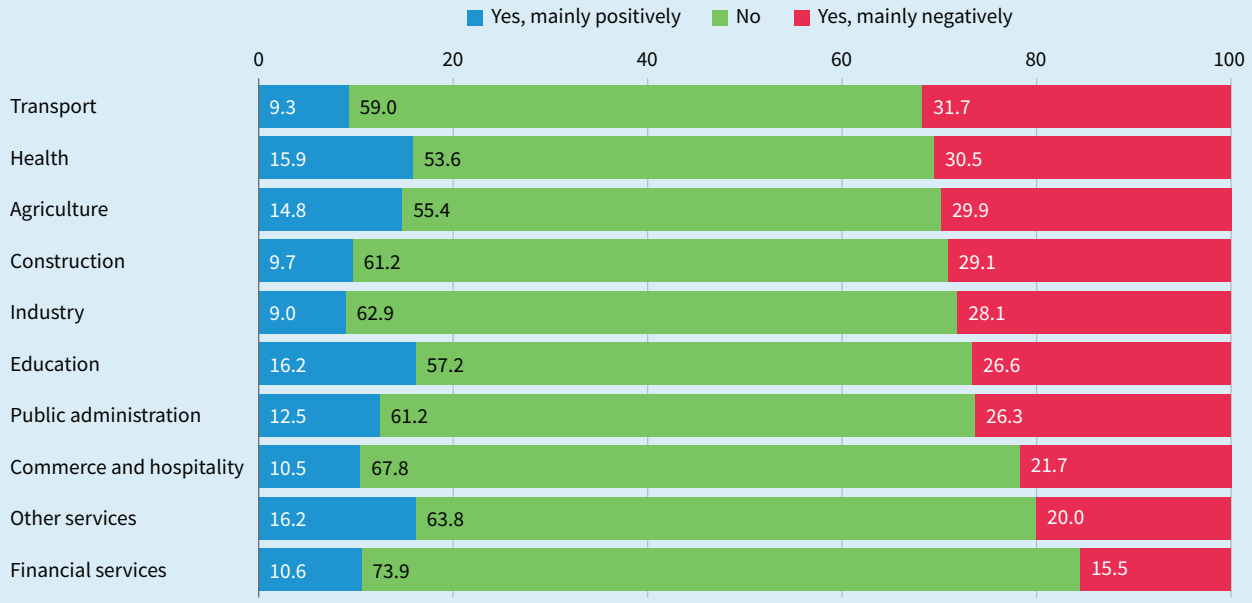
Figure 31: Proportion of workers informed about (a) safety and health at work and (b) prevention of work-related stress, by sector, EU-27 (%)



a positive effect on their health has increased compared with 2010, but remains comparable with the 2015 level (12 %). No effect at all was perceived by 63 % of respondents in 2024, the same as 2015, and down from 66 % in 2010.

A consistently high proportion of workers in lower-skilled occupations (33–35 %) (e.g. agricultural workers, craft workers, plant and machine operators, and those in elementary occupations) report a negative impact on their health as a result of their work. Transport (32 %), health (31 %), agriculture (30 %), construction (29 %) and industry (28 %) are sectors where larger shares of workers report that work affects their health negatively. Interestingly, health (16 %) and agriculture (15 %) are also sectors in which relatively more workers state that work affects their health positively (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Impact of work on workers' health, by sector, EU-27 (%)



Balancing work and private life

The ability of workers to ensure a good fit between their job and other areas of their life — such as family, social relationships and personal development — is referred to as work–life balance. When this balance is poor, it can harm workers' well-being and performance, disrupt family and social connections, and hinder personal growth. To explore this issue, the survey asked respondents how well their working hours fit with their family or social commitments outside of work (considering all jobs held).

Key findings

- **Work–life balance has improved slowly but steadily for both men and women since 2010: in the EU-27, most workers report that their working hours fit very well (31 %) or well (52 %) with their family or social commitments outside of work.**
- The spillover of work into private life varies considerably across occupations. For example, skilled agricultural workers are most likely to worry about work in their free time (29 % reported doing so always or most of the time) while the proportion of plant and machine operators doing so is significantly lower (6 %).
- The sector in which a person works also affects their work–life balance, with 16 % of workers in the health sector reporting that their job impacted negatively on the time they spent with their family.

Finding work–life balance

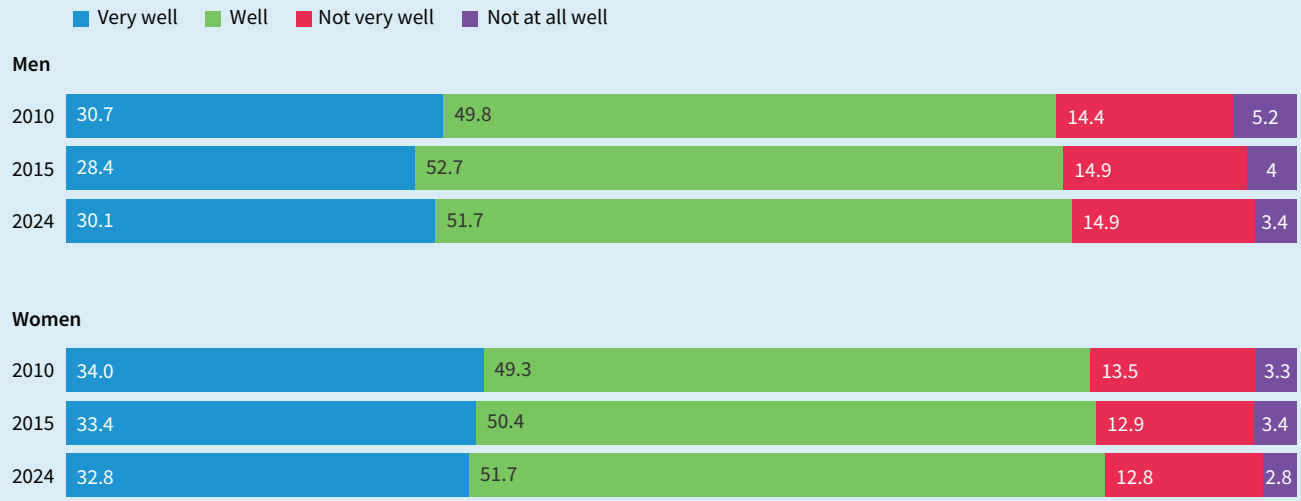
In the EU-27, the majority of workers report that their working hours fit very well (31 %) or well (52 %) with their family or social commitments outside of work. In contrast, 14 % say their working hours do not fit very well, while 3 % report that they do not fit at all.

Overall, men are slightly less likely than women to have a (very) good fit between their job(s) and private life (82 % versus 85 %), but this changes for both men and women over the life course. It is reported by fewer workers when there are children in their households (78 % of men and 82 % of women). Among occupations, clerical workers (89 %) and professionals (86 %) have the highest shares of workers who have a (very) good fit between their job(s) and private life, while agricultural workers (71 %) and services and sales workers (78 %) are least likely to have such a match [2]. Employees have a better work–life balance than self-employed people – 84 % of employees reported having a (very) good fit compared with 75 % of self-employed individuals.

There has been a small improvement in work–life balance for both men and women since 2010. In 2010, 81 % of men reported that their working hours fit very well or well with their family or social commitments; this percentage remained stable in 2015 and increased to 82 % in 2024. The trend is similar for women, with 83 % reporting a (very) good match in 2010, compared with 84 % in 2015 and 85 % in 2024 (Figure 33).

(2) Armed forces were excluded from this comparison due to small sample size.

Figure 33: Fit between working hours and family and social commitments outside of work, by gender and year, EU-27 (%)



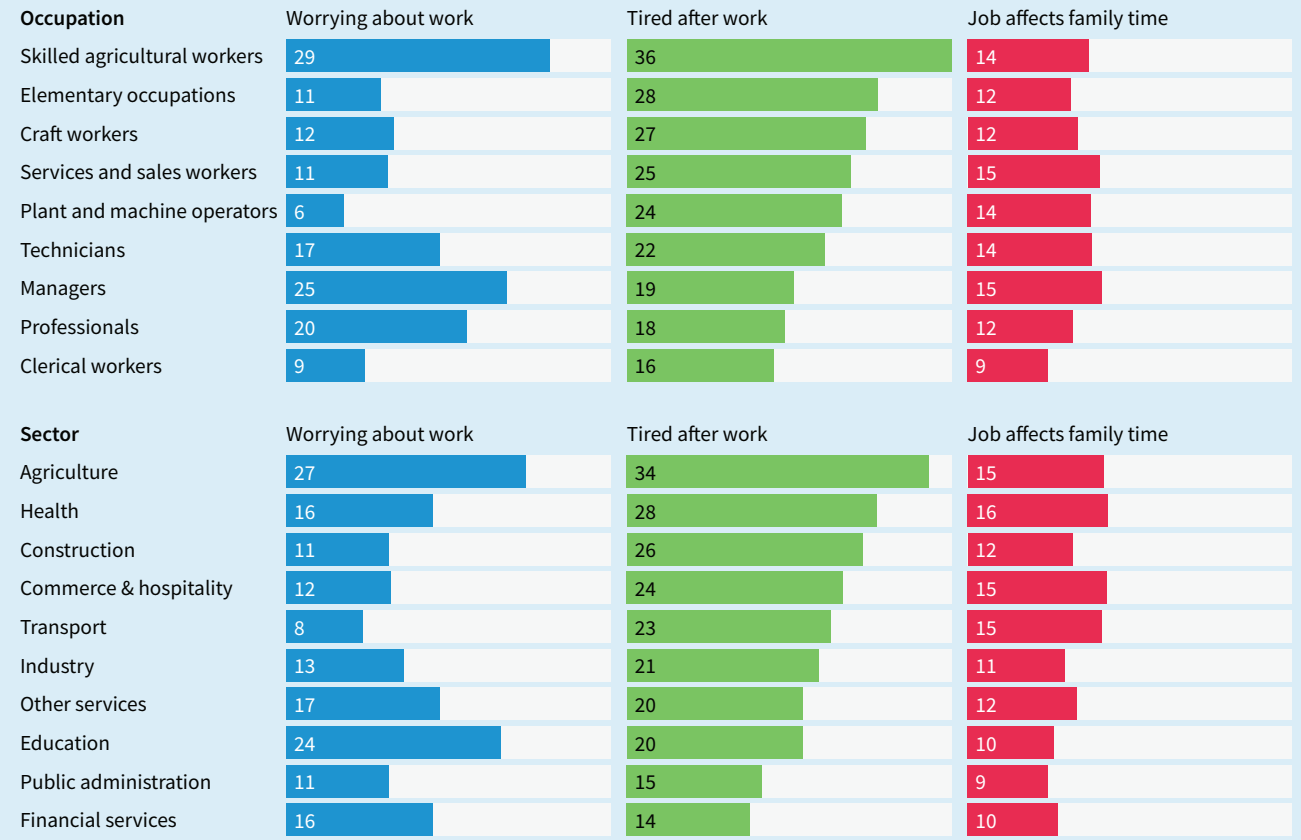
Notes: *Weighted data. Answer categories for 'don't know' and 'refused' are not displayed. Formulation of the answer categories varies slightly between editions.*
Sources: *EWCS 2024 (Q47), EWCS 2015 (Q44) and EWCS 2010 (Q41).*

Sector and occupational differences in work–life conflicts

Working life and private life influence each other. Work–life conflict means that fulfilling demands in one area can make it difficult to meet obligations in the other. The EWCS captures the spillover of work into people's private lives by asking respondents how often over the 12 months prior to the survey they kept worrying about work when they were not working ('worrying about work'); felt too tired after work to do some household jobs ('tired after work'); and found that their job prevented them from giving the time they wanted to family ('job affects family time').

There is considerable variation across occupations in the spillover of work into private life (Figure 34).

Figure 34: Work–life conflicts, by gender and occupation, EU-27 (%)



Notes: *Weighted data. Percentages correspond to those who responded 'always' or 'most of the time' when asked how often they experienced each of the three conflicts in the 12 months prior to the survey (Q48). Answer categories 'does not apply', 'don't know' and 'refused' are not displayed.*

Skilled agricultural workers stand out as experiencing the highest levels of strain across two dimensions: 3 out of 10 (29 %) worry about work always or most of the time during their free time and 1 in 3 (36 %) are always or most of the time too tired after work. Similarly, 28 % of workers in elementary occupations and 27 % of craft workers also mention high levels of fatigue after work. By contrast, the lowest levels of tiredness are found among clerical workers (16 %). Clerical workers also have the lowest share of workers who mention that their job always or most of the time affects their family time (9 %). At the other end of the spectrum are managers and services and sales workers: 15 % report that family time is affected by their job. Managers experience the second-highest levels of worrying about work (25 %), although their fatigue level after work remains below the average (19 %).

Among the economic sectors, agriculture stands out with the highest shares of workers who always or most of the time worry about work (27 %) and feel tired after work (34 %), and the third highest share of workers whose job affects their family time (15 %). The health sector has a high percentage of workers who feel tired after work (28 %) and whose job affects family time (16 %). The education sector has a significant share of workers who worry about work when not working (24 %).

Gender equality

When examining trends in job quality, differences in job quality between men and women for the seven dimensions of job quality have been highlighted. A contributing factor behind the differences in job quality is gender segregation at work. Gender imbalances at management level are a further indication that gender equality at work is far from being achieved.

Key findings

- **A gender-balanced workplace remains the exception, with only 23 % of workers reporting that they work in workplaces where about half of the workforce is female.**
- Most sectors tend to be dominated by either men or women; employment is more or less equally shared from a gender perspective in only four sectors: commerce and hospitality, financial services, public administration and other services.
- Almost two thirds of all new jobs created in the EU since 2000 have been occupied by women.
- Very little progress has been made towards gender balance at management level over the past 25 years. While the proportion of female managers increased from 27 % in the 2000/2001 survey to 34 % in 2024, they continue to be concentrated in female-dominated workplaces.

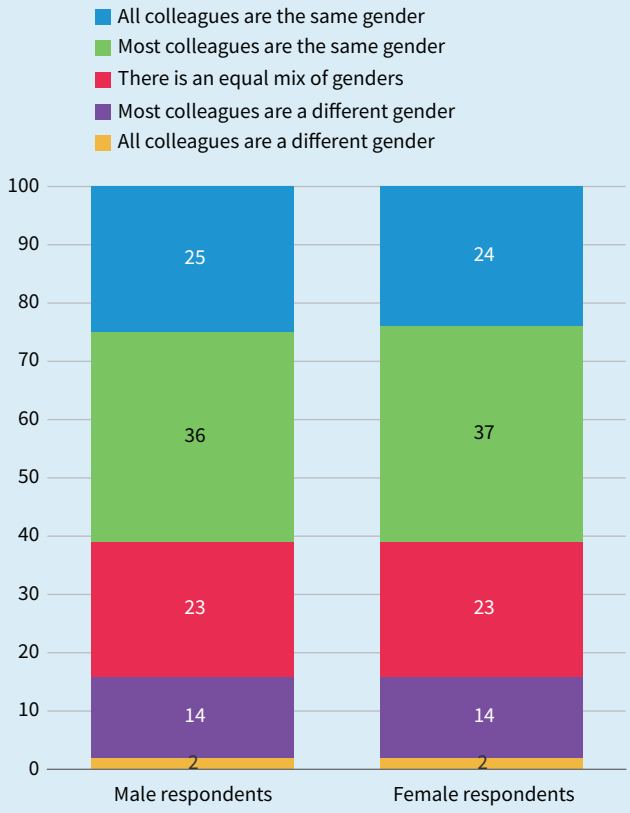
Gender segregation at work

Around two out of every three net new jobs created in the EU this century have been occupied by women. Women accounted for 46.4 % of the EU-27 workforce in 2024 compared with 45.2 % in 2010. Some progress has therefore been made towards meeting the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan objective of halving the gender employment gap by 2030 (compared with the 2019 baseline). Despite this, based on current trends, the target is unlikely to be met (Eurostat, 2025).

Increasing female participation has contributed to a narrowing of gender gaps in some sectors and occupations, but not all. The context is one of persistent gender segregation of employment. This is not only true when looking at sectors and occupations, but also in the workplace.

A gender-balanced workplace remains the exception, with only 23 % of workers reporting that they work in workplaces where about half of the workforce is female (Figure 35).

Figure 35: Share of co-workers with the same gender as respondent, EU-27 (%)



The sectoral picture is equally one of gender segregation. In only four sectors – commerce and hospitality, financial services, public administration and other services – has employment been, and remains, more or less equally shared between men and women. The remaining sectors tend to be dominated by either men or women and gender majorities were largely stable in the case of health and transport or growing in the case of education and agriculture between 2010 and 2024 (Table 8).

The female share of employment has been stable or declining in all broad occupational groups with the exception of the high-skilled categories: professionals and managers. In 2024, the majority of professionals in the EU-27 were women (53.7 %) (Table 9). As this was the largest occupation, and by some margin also the fastest

Table 8: Female employment share, by sector, EU-27, 2010–2024 (%)

Sector	2010	2015	2024	Difference 2010-24, percentage points
All sectors	45.2	45.8	46.4	1.2
Agriculture	38.2	34.9	30.5	-7.6
Industry	28.9	28.8	29.7	0.8
Construction	8.6	9.2	10.6	2.0
Commerce and hospitality	50.8	50.6	50.2	-0.6
Transport	22.7	22.4	22.5	-0.1
Financial services	51.7	52.3	51.9	0.3
Public administration	45.7	46.3	49.6	3.9
Health	78.0	78.5	77.8	-0.2
Education	71.3	71.8	72.5	1.2
Other services	51.7	50.7	49.3	-2.4

Source: *EU-LFS.*

Table 9: Female employment share, by occupation, EU-27, 2010–24 (%)

Sector	2010	2015	2024	Difference 2010-24, percentage points
All occupations	45.2	45.8	46.4	1.2
Managers	33.3	31.9	35.2	1.9
Professionals	49.7	53.0	53.7	4.0
Technicians	53.8	49.6	49.9	-4.0
Clerical workers	67.6	67.2	66.0	-1.6
Services and sales workers	68.0	62.9	63.3	-4.7
Skilled agricultural workers	38.1	33.7	27.7	-10.4
Craft workers	10.6	11.1	10.6	0.0
Plant and machine operators	17.4	18.1	17.3	-0.1
Elementary occupations	54.9	56.8	53.5	-1.4

Source: *EU-LFS.*

growing, it has contributed to a more pronounced upgrading of female employment compared with male employment while also closing the headcount gap (Eurofound, 2025).

Female managers

Minimal progress has been made towards gender balance at management level over the past 25 years. The proportion of female managers increased from 27 % in the 2000/2001 survey to 34 % in 2024 (Figure 36). However, female managers continue to be concentrated in female-dominated workplaces, where gender composition of immediate bosses has reached parity. Women are hereby much more likely to have a female boss (52 %) than men are (18 %).

Men with higher levels of education are more likely to have female supervisors, with 25 % of highly educated men reporting this, compared with 15 % of those with a medium level of education and 12 % of those with a lower level of education. No significant differences in the gender distribution of supervisors are observed among women across education levels. The presence of a female boss is strongly associated with the gender composition of the workplace. Only 5 % of employees in workplaces with (nearly) no female workers report having a female supervisor. In contrast, this share increases to 30 % in gender-balanced workplaces and rises further to 76 % in environments where (nearly) all employees are female. This reflects a labour market that remains heavily segregated by gender.

Figure 36: Proportion of female bosses, by gender of respondents, EU-27, 2000–2024 (%)

Note: *Weighted data. Answer categories 'I have no boss', 'other', 'don't know' and 'refused' are not displayed (Q67).*

Engagement and motivation

Research has consistently highlighted the significance of worker engagement in enhancing workers' well-being, their sense of personal fulfilment and job satisfaction, as well as its positive impact on company performance (see, for example, Fawkes, 2007; Kumar & Pensari, 2015; Eurofound, 2022b). Fostering worker engagement is a key objective of human resource policies and work organisation practices. Effective leadership plays a vital role in creating and sustaining worker engagement, setting the tone for a positive work environment. Worker engagement has also been used as an outcome measure for sustainable work and is generally associated with work motivation. The latter is vital for keeping workers longer in the labour market in good physical and mental health.

Key findings

- **The data show a slight decline in workers' engagement (as measured by the levels of energy, enthusiasm and absorption they feel in relation to their job) when compared with the 2015 survey results.**
- The proportion of workers carrying out monotonous work has increased over the years, rising from 39 % in 1995 to 48 % in 2024.
- Variations are apparent at country level with regard to workers feeling motivated by the organisation they work for: 80 % of workers in Ireland are motivated by their organisation to do good work. Similar proportions apply for Denmark (79 %), the Netherlands and Austria (both 78 %), while Czechia, Greece and Cyprus all report proportions below 50 %.

Engagement and creativity

Work engagement is a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption (Schaufeli and Salanova, 2007). It is the opposite of the main dimensions of burnout: exhaustion and cynicism (Maslach and Jackson, 1981). At an individual level, engagement is positively related to job performance, creativity and health and well-being; it prevents frustration with work and absenteeism. At a collective level, work engagement contributes to greater commitment to the organisation, client/user satisfaction and – as a consequence – higher employee retention. When compared with the EWCS 2015 results, the 2024 data indicate the same proportion of workers reporting enthusiasm ('you are enthusiastic about your job') but fewer reporting energy ('you feel full of energy at work') and absorption ('time flies when you are working') (Figure 37).

This reduction in terms of engagement is reflected in a similar pattern in terms of creativity. As discussed in the section on skills and discretion, the share of workers stating that they can apply their own ideas at work always or most of the time has been declining since 2005 and has affected male and female workers. In a similar vein, the proportion of workers carrying out monotonous work has increased by 8 percentage points since it was first captured: from 39 % in 1995 to 48 % in 2024 (Figure 38).

Figure 37: Workers reporting aspects of engagement always or most of the time, 2015 and 2024, EU-27 (%)

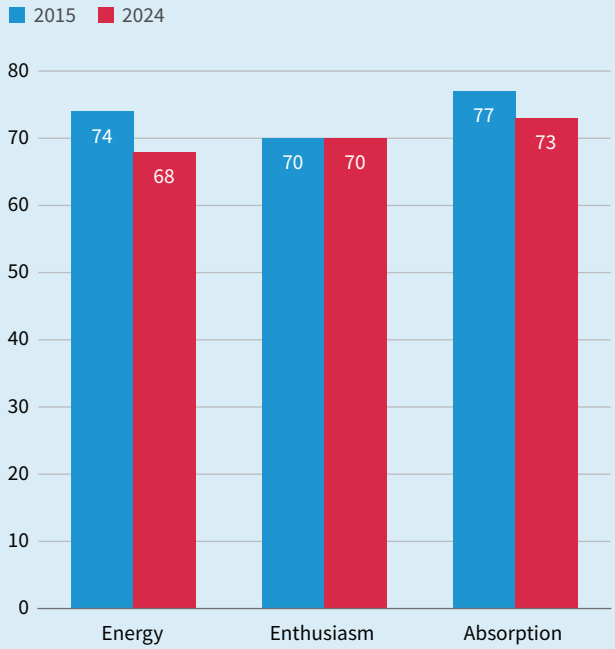
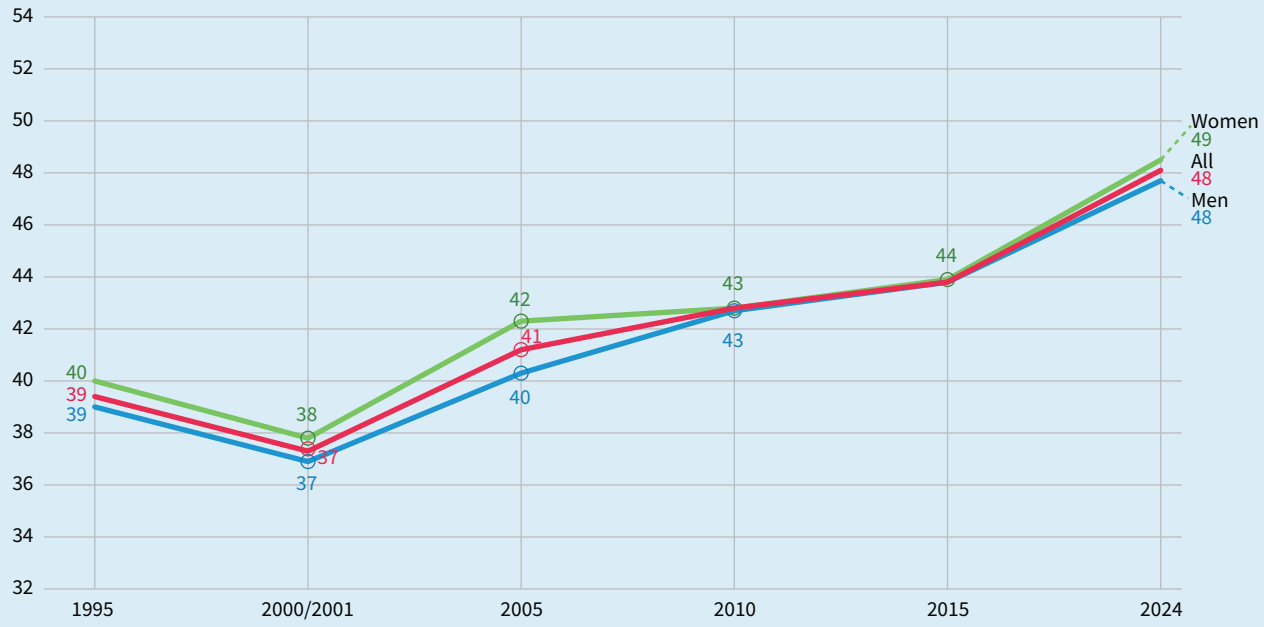


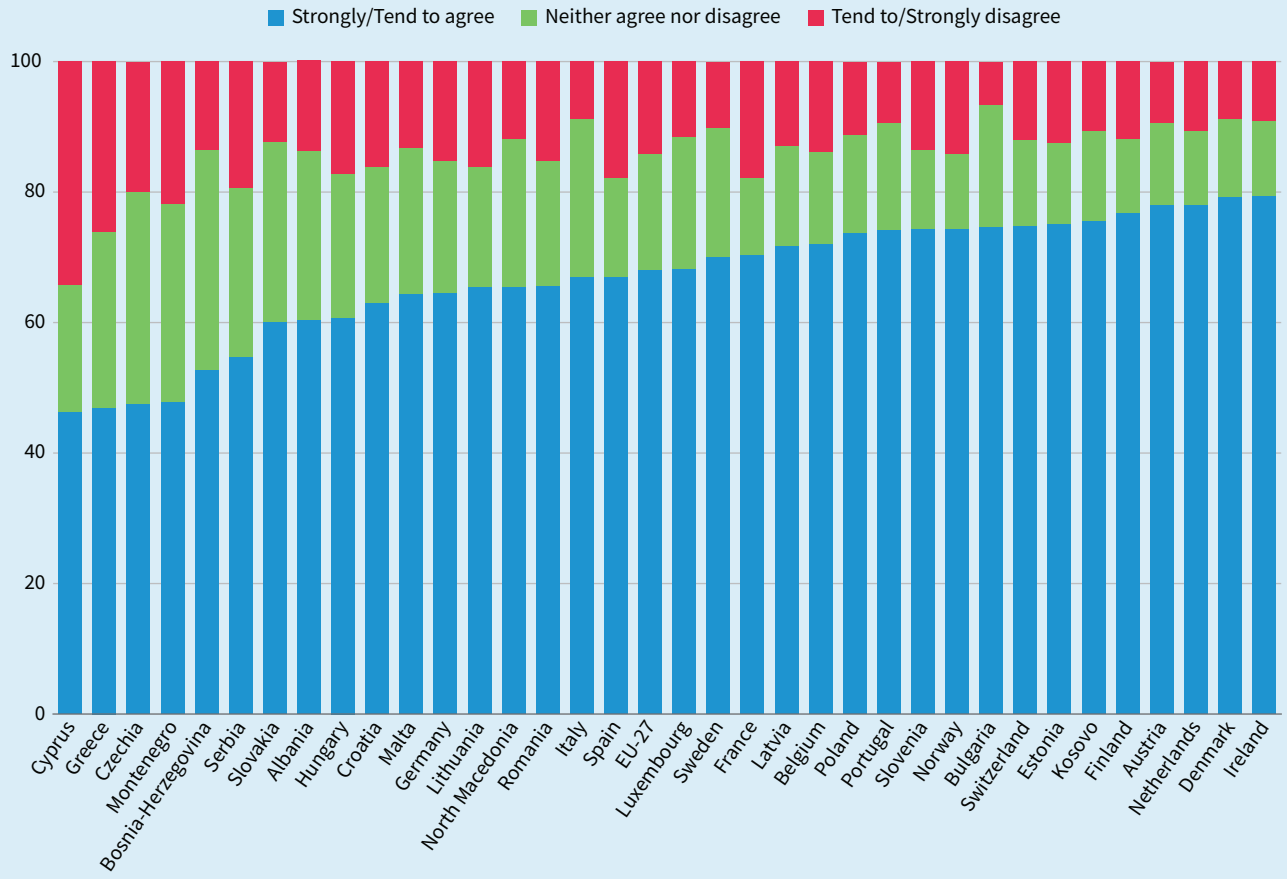
Figure 38: Workers carrying out monotonous tasks, by gender, 1995–2024, EU-27 (%)



Motivation

The role of organisations in motivating workers is an important aspect of work engagement. The highest proportions of workers who strongly agree or tend to agree with the statement that the organisation they work for motivates them to do good work were reported in Ireland (80 %), Denmark (79 %), the Netherlands and Austria (both 78 %), while Czechia, Greece and Cyprus all report proportions below 50 %. With 35 % of workers tending to disagree or strongly disagreeing with the statement, Cyprus had by far the biggest proportion of negative assessments (Figure 39).

Figure 39: Motivating organisations, by country (%)



Across the sociodemographic groups, men are observed to be more likely to be motivated by the organisation (70 %) than women (66 %) as are younger (aged 16–29) and post-retirement age workers (aged 65+) compared with prime age and older workers. Education is a factor in motivation: workers with a tertiary degree are more likely to be motivated (73 %) than those with medium (67 %) or low levels of formal education (65 %).

What workers want

The EWCS data can be used to assess the fit between workers' current work situation and their individual preferences. For example, the data allow an assessment to be made as to whether current working hours fit workers' working time preferences. The data can also be used to identify workers' preferences regarding the aspects of work that matter most to them.

Key findings

- **Most workers (56 %) are happy with their working hours.**
- **It's not all about the money: a safe working environment for mental and physical health and a trusting working environment are the most important aspects for the largest shares of workers in the EU at 71 % and 69 %, respectively.** Good pay and benefits come in third, being considered as very important by two thirds of respondents.
- Doing work that is good for the natural environment comes at the bottom of the list, being considered very important by fewer than 50 % of respondents.
- For self-employed people, being able to use their own initiative at work is the most important aspect of work for them, with 74 % of all self-employed people ranking it in first place.
- Gender and age play a role in what matters most to workers: men between the ages of 16 and 54 value good pay and benefits most, while a safe working environment for mental and physical health is the most important aspect for women aged between 16 and 64.
- In the EU-27, almost 1 in 5 respondents aged 45 or over would like to work 'as long as possible' while 1 in 10 responded they would like to retire 'as early as possible'.

Working time preferences

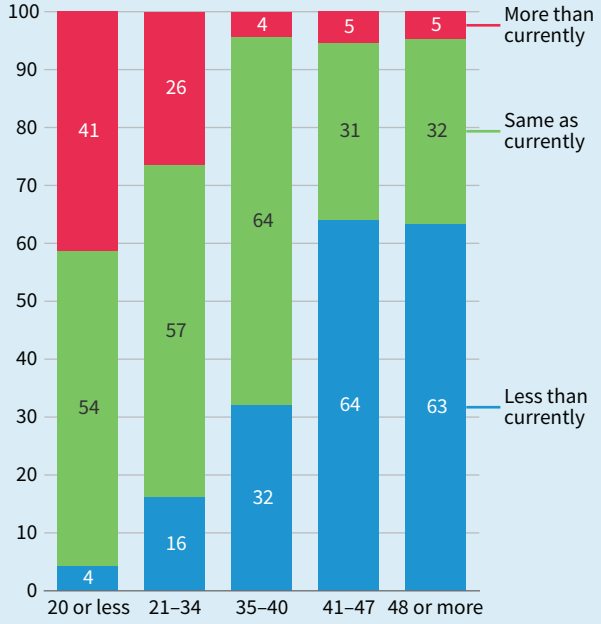
In 2024, most workers (56 %) were happy with their working hours. However, an important share would prefer to work fewer hours than they were at the time of the survey, provided that they could make a free choice regarding working hours and taking into account the need to earn a living: 35 % of male workers and 31 % of female workers fell into this category. An additional 11 % would prefer to work more hours than they were at the time of the survey.

A preference to work fewer hours is more likely to be reported by men aged between 30 and 54 (38 %), while a preference for longer hours is expressed by relatively more young men and women: 20 % of women and men aged 16 to 24 would like to work more hours. This compares with only 10 % of women and 5 % of men aged between 55 and 64.

There are considerable differences across countries when it comes to working time preferences and substantial gender differences in some countries. For instance, the share of workers preferring to work fewer hours is larger for women than for men in Cyprus, Finland, Lithuania and Sweden, whereas the opposite is the case in Austria, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg and Spain. The shares of those preferring to work longer hours are larger among both men and women in France, Malta and the Netherlands and among women in Germany (and Switzerland).

Unsurprisingly, those who work very long hours are more likely to say they would prefer to work less: the share of those who would prefer to work fewer hours nearly doubles to close to 70 % of those working 41 hours or more per week. At the same time, the share of workers who want to work more hours per week quadruples to 41 % among those whose usual working week is 20 hours or less per week (Figure 40).

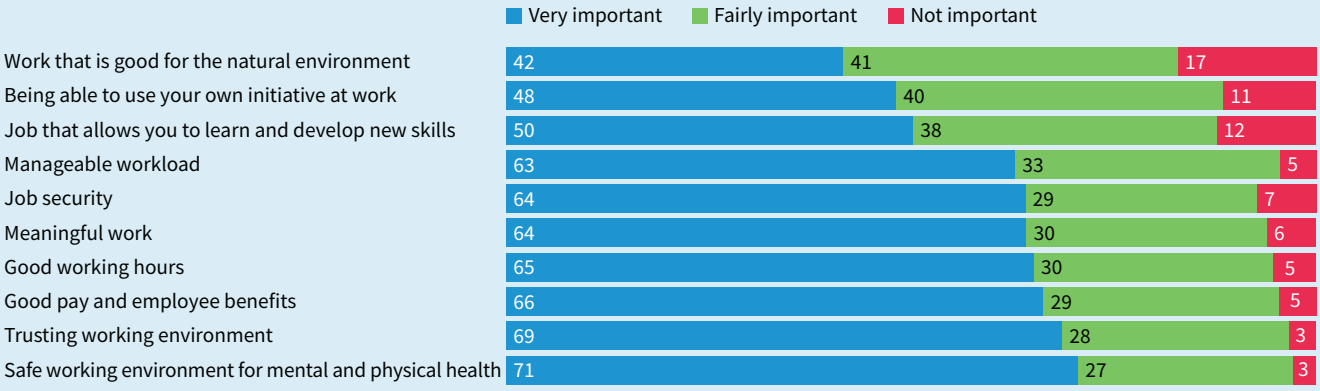
Figure 40: Preferred working hours compared with current situation (main and second jobs), 2024 (%)



Aspects of work that matter most

Thinking about work in general, respondents to the EWCS 2024 were asked to say how important several work-related aspects are to them. Figure 41 ranks such aspects from the most important to the least important, being indicative of workers' preferences regarding the aspects asked about. A safe working environment for mental and physical health and a trusting working environment are the most important aspects for the largest shares of workers in the EU: 71 % and 69 %, respectively. Good pay and benefits come in third, being considered as very important by two thirds of respondents. Being able to learn and develop new skills, to use one's own initiative at work and to do work that is good for the natural environment appear at the bottom of the list, being considered as very important by half of workers or fewer. Remarkably, the top aspect for the self-employed is being able to use one's own initiative at work (reported as very important by 74 % of all self-employed people), and is only then followed by a safe (73 %) and trusting working environment (69 %).

Figure 41: Relative importance of several work-related aspects, EU-27 (%)



It is noteworthy that the order of importance given by men and women regarding these work-related aspects is different and seems to change over the life course. In general, a safe working environment for mental and physical health is the most important aspect for men and women. However, while good pay and employee benefits come second for men, women prioritise a trusting working environment. Good pay and benefits rank only in 6th place for women, after good working hours, a manageable workload and meaningful work. Good pay and benefits are the most important aspect for men up to the age of 54, whereas a safe working environment for mental and

Figure 42: Top five aspects of work that matter most to men and women in different age groups

	Men				Women			
	16–29	30–54	55–64	65+	16–29	30–54	55–64	65+
I	Good pay and benefits	Good pay and benefits	Safe environment	Safe environment	Safe environment	Safe environment	Safe environment	Trusting environment
II	Safe environment	Safe environment	Trusting environment	Trusting environment	Trusting environment	Trusting environment	Trusting environment	Meaningful work
III	Trusting environment	Trusting environment	Good pay and benefits	Meaningful work	Good pay and benefits	Good working hours	Manageable workload	Safe environment
IV	Good working hours	Good working hours	Manageable workload	Manageable workload	Manageable workload	Meaningful work	Job security	Manageable workload
V	Job security	Meaningful work	Meaningful work	Able to use own initiative at work	Job security	Manageable workload	Meaningful work	Good working hours

physical health is the most important aspect for women of all age groups, except for those aged 65+, for whom a trusting working environment is the most important. A trusting working environment increases in importance with age and becomes the second most important aspect for men aged 55 or more, for whom a safe working environment for mental and physical health is the most important aspect (Figure 42).

Retirement preferences

Respondents aged 45 years or older were asked to state their preferred age for retiring from work: 'Thinking about retirement, until what age do you want to work?' Some 63 % of workers mentioned a specific age, while 37 % spontaneously responded differently.

A substantial proportion expressed a desire to continue working indefinitely, with around 1 in 5 (19 %) stating they would work 'as long as possible'. In contrast, approximately 1 in 10 respondents in this age group (11 %) indicated a preference for earlier retirement, stating they would retire 'as early as possible'. For those who specified a concrete retirement age, the average desired retirement age was 63.8 years for men and 63.1 years for women in the EU-27.

The desired retirement age (if mentioned explicitly) exhibits significant variation across countries (Figure 43). Notably, Albania (66.3 years) and the Scandinavian countries (Denmark, Norway and Sweden, all close to 66 years), report the highest desired retirement ages. In contrast, Slovenia (60.3 years), Luxembourg (60.7 years) and Poland (61.1 years) have the lowest desired retirement ages.

Furthermore, the survey reveals interesting patterns in workers' attitudes to retirement. Respondents who spontaneously answered the question rather than naming a specific age, were categorised into 'want to work as long as possible', 'want to stop working as early as possible' or 'don't know'. Estonia (22 %), Hungary (18 %) and Montenegro (17 %) have the highest proportions of respondents who said they wanted to work for as long as possible. Conversely, Portugal (13 %), Italy (12 %), Greece and Latvia (both 9 %) have the highest proportions of respondents who would prefer to retire as early as possible.

Figure 43: Age preferences to leave employment, by country (%)

	Specific response (average)	Stop working as early as possible	Work as long as possible
Albania	66.3	0.9	7.9
Denmark	65.9	1.5	6.1
Norway	65.7	1.8	6.6
Sweden	65.6	2.9	5.2
Netherlands	65.3	1.8	8.3
Estonia	64.9	5.8	21.9
Kosovo	64.6	0.1	3
Finland	64.5	3.2	6.9
Germany	64.5	2.3	7.4
Italy	64.4	12.2	14.6
Ireland	64.2	2.1	10.1
Switzerland	64	2.1	8.8
Serbia	63.7	6.9	16
Lithuania	63.6	6.2	8.1
Portugal	63.5	12.9	10
Czechia	63.4	5.8	15.7
Greece	63.1	9	9.1
Latvia	63.1	8.9	11.7
Malta	62.9	1.6	11.6
Slovakia	62.9	6.1	12.5
Spain	62.8	5	5.4
Belgium	62.6	1.7	5.3
Bosnia-Herzegovina	62.5	5.7	14.7
Croatia	62.4	3.1	11.4
France	62.4	3.1	4.2
Bulgaria	62.3	6.8	11.1
Hungary	62.3	3.7	17.7
North Macedonia	62.2	2.8	6.3
Montenegro	62.1	3.2	16.7
Romania	62	6	10
Austria	61.8	7.6	10.6
Cyprus	61.8	0.4	5.5
Poland	61.1	7.7	15.8
Luxembourg	60.7	3.2	5.7
Slovenia	60.3	5	10.3

Employee representation

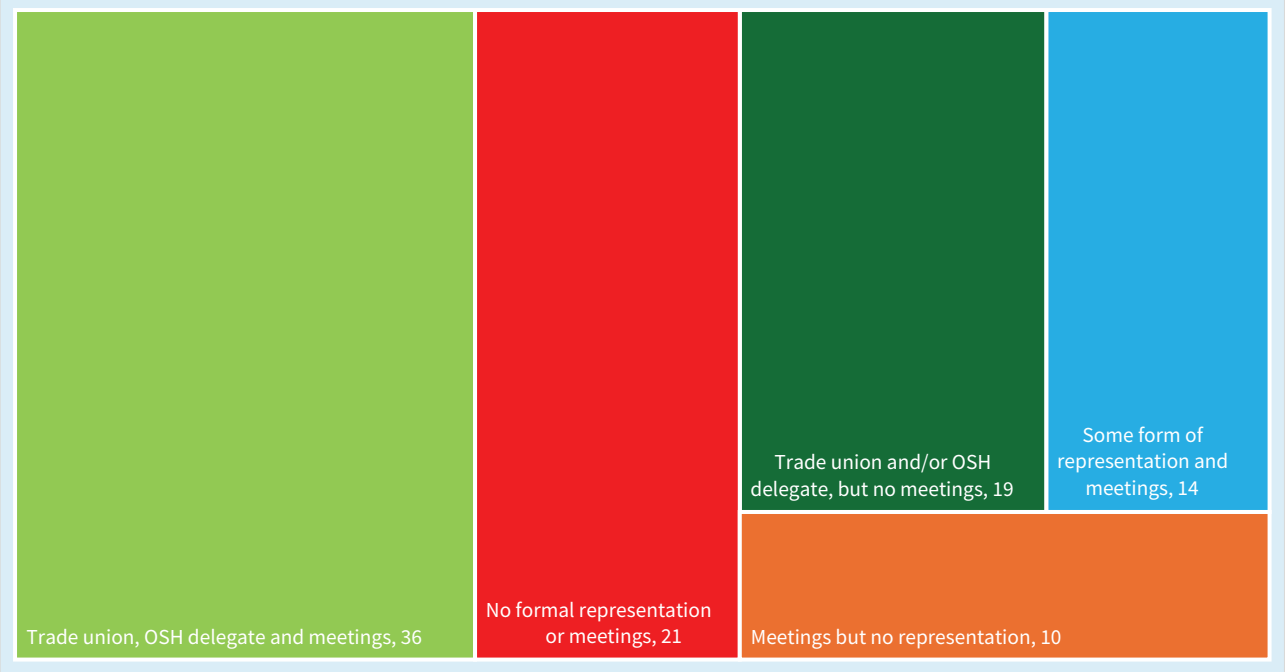
The EWCS asks employees about the existence of various forms of employee representation in the company or organisation they work for: a health and safety delegate or committee; a trade union, works council or similar committee representing employees; or a regular meeting in which employees can express their views about what is happening in their organisation.

Key findings

- While the vast majority of employees in the EU (some 80 %) have access to some form of collective representation or at least to meetings where they can express their views about what is happening in their organisation, a significant minority do not have formal representation or meetings in the workplace.
- There are clear disparities at sectoral level when it comes to employee representation: 56 % of workers in agriculture do not have collective representation or meetings to express their views while the share is much smaller in public administration, education and financial services (11 % or less).

Based on the answers received, employees can be classified into the groups represented in Figure 44. The vast majority of employees in the EU have access to some sort of collective form of representation or at least to meetings where they can express their views about what is happening in the organisation. However, it is noteworthy that, in 2024, 21 % of employees did not have formal representation or meetings in the workplace and an additional 10 % reported the existence of meetings where they can express their views but have no collective representation.

Figure 44: Access to employee collective representation and meetings to express views, EU-27 (%)



The share of employees who do not have collective representation or meetings to express their views is much smaller in public administration, education and financial services (11 % or less) than in construction (29 %), commerce and hospitality (36 %) or agriculture (56 %). This share diminishes with workplace size and is very small (3 %) in workplaces with 250 workers or more. The share of employees without collective representation or meetings is larger in Portugal (close to half) and Albania (45 %), Bulgaria and Hungary (both around 40 %), and comparatively smaller in Germany and the Nordic countries.

Conclusions

There is more than one aspect that makes a job a good job. Eurofound's framework highlights the multidimensional nature of job quality. Measuring progress in the different dimensions since 2010 shows that four indices measuring the non-pecuniary dimensions of job quality (Physical environment, Working time quality, Skills and discretion, Prospects) have improved in general. The Work intensity and Social environment indices, however, have worsened for women. The most prominent improvement is apparent in the Skills and discretion index.

The analysis of trends in job quality in the EU confirms that workers experience favourable conditions in many dimensions of job quality. Because good jobs combine so many elements of the multiple dimensions of job quality, there remains plenty of opportunity for further improvement, despite this overall positive trend. Interventions aimed at improving the quality of jobs need to consider the uneven distribution of recent gains. Differences are apparent between sectors and occupations, between men and women, and between different groups of workers. And perfect jobs – jobs that score highly on every dimension and sub-dimension of job quality – are hard to find. It is possible, however, to identify those that have low scores for all or many dimensions and this can help to focus efforts to further improve job quality in the EU.

The physical environment has improved more for men than for women, and the risks that men and women are exposed to differ. This is linked to differences in the type of physical risks prevalent in the sectors and occupations that men and women predominantly work in.

The social environment has actually worsened for women since 2010, whereas it has improved for men. This is mainly due to the fact that women are more exposed to adverse social behaviour.

An improvement in work intensity for men is counterbalanced by a deterioration for women, who experienced higher levels of work intensity in 2024 than they did in 2010.

As regards working time quality, men have seen a more pronounced improvement than women since 2010. The index is now at the same level for both men and women. Improvements have come about mainly because long working days and working weeks are becoming rarer and a higher share of workers have access to flexible working time arrangements.

The overall positive development in the area of skills and discretion is a result of more workers benefiting from access to training. However, when it comes to using and growing skills by learning new things on the job, solving complex tasks or unforeseen problems, marked differences remain between higher-skilled and lower-skilled occupations.

Prospects have improved for both men and women. This is due to improvements in career prospects and a drop in job insecurity. However, given that men benefit from better career prospects than women, a closing of the gender gap is not in sight in this dimension.

These differences mean that, despite overall positive trends in the development of job quality in the EU, attention must be paid to gender gaps and the specific situation of workers in different sectors and occupations.

The changes in the world of work brought about by digitalisation add to the need for a detailed analysis of the situation of different groups of workers. With around 20 % of workers engaged in some form of telework, the EWCS 2024 provides evidence that such workers are at a higher risk of blurred boundaries between their work and private life. The impact of technology use, including the use of AI and algorithmic management, requires further investigation. The EWCS 2024 shows that workers experience both the removal and creation of tasks as a result of technology use. The use of algorithmic management for allocating work tasks, monitoring performance and determining when work is done is still rather limited. However, in some sectors, such as financial services, even in 2024 around one third of workers reported that computer programmes allocate their work tasks and monitor their performance.

The EU is committed to improving job quality further. The European Commission is currently working with the social partners and the Member States on a flagship initiative, the **Quality Jobs Roadmap**, with the aim of promoting quality jobs in the EU. **Quality jobs are recognised as a key factor in enabling and supporting competitiveness, fostering social fairness and contributing to just transitions.** Quality jobs must also fulfil workers' expectations of work. The EWCS 2024 shows that even though good pay and employee benefits rank highest for a large share of workers, a safe working environment for mental and physical health is most frequently mentioned as very important, followed by the importance of a trusting working environment.

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Further information

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