European Working Conditions Survey

Flexible work practices

Braunschweig, 22/23 November 2004

Greet Vermeylen
Outline of the presentation

- European Foundation
- European Working Conditions Survey
- Some flexible working practices in detail
  - Temporary agency work
  - Part-time
- Flexibility and social protection
The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

- A decentralized agency of the EU

- Administered by an ‘Governing Board’
  - composed of national representatives of the social partners and governments and the European Commission
The European Foundation’s role

Research and analyse developments affecting the working conditions of European workers & monitor trends in the working environment

Generate policy-relevant research and findings which will contribute to improving the quality of work in Europe
Indicators of Quality of Work and Employment

**CAREER AND JOB SECURITY**
- Status
- Income
- Social protection
- Workers rights

**HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**
- Health and safety outcomes
- Exposure to risks
- Occupational Health and Safety prevention framework

**COMBINING WORKING AND NON-WORKING LIFE**
- Organisation of time
- Social infrastructures and provisions

**COMPETENCE DEVELOPMENT**
- Skills
- Training and education
- Career development
- Learning organisation

**QWE**
Foundation’s work in this area:

• Monitoring instruments:
  • European Working Conditions surveys
  • European Working Conditions Observatory

• Strategic research

• Dissemination activities: conferences, publications, press events
Monitoring tools

- Foundation Working Conditions surveys - 1990, 1995, 2000/02
- Sectoral analyses – 1996, 2002
- European Working Conditions Observatory (EWCO)
- European Industrial Relations Observatory
- Company surveys
- European Monitoring Centre on Change

Working conditions in the European Union
The Foundation surveys

- First European Survey on Working Conditions in 1990 (prototype survey with only 30 questions)
- Second European Survey on Working Conditions in 1995 (60 questions)
- Third European Survey on Working Conditions in 2000 (80 questions) + one in Acceding and Candidate countries in 2001/2002 (idem)
The European Working Conditions Surveys

- Next data collection in 2005
- Aims:
  - provide an overview of the state of working conditions in Europe
  - understand relationships
  - identify trends
  - indicate the nature and contents of changes
The European Working Conditions Surveys

- An workers survey (covers employed and self-employed), probably 1500 / country

- Covering a wide field on themes: demographics of the employees, exposure to physical risks, working time, reconciliation, work organisation, income level, health outcomes, etc.
The European Working Conditions Surveys

- Impact so far, the surveys have
  - Drawn the attention of policy-makers to particular trends, e.g. increase in time pressure for employees, stress, type of work contract and working conditions
  - Contributed to the stimulation of the policy debate, e.g. on precariousness and its consequences
  - Provided impetus for further research e.g. on stress prevention, TAW, flexibility
Structure of the questionnaire

- Employee and company information
- Nature of the work
- Physical environment factors
- Working time
- Organisation of work
- Satisfaction, outcomes (inc. health)
- Information and consultation
- Violence and discrimination
- Income
Main findings

- No automatic improvement of working conditions
- Physical risks still prevalent – exposure to noise, heavy loads, painful positions have risen
- Intensification of work - higher pace, more deadlines
- Improvements in job control / autonomy
- Extensive flexible time and work organisation patterns
- Gender segregation still persists
- Temporary workers report poorer working conditions
- Ageing of the workforce
New member states / candidate countries: compared to EU15

- Structural differences
- Higher activity rate for women
- Similar breakdown on employment status
  - Same SE/Empl. Ratio (？COUNTRIES)
  - Similar breakdown among employees
- More small companies
- Different distribution between job categories
Labour market flexibility

- Increase in temporary work (fixed-term and temporary agency work) / long term vs. short term
- Clear correlation between temporary work and bad working conditions
- Structural reasons, but
- Status is an aggravating factor
- Directive on TAW
- Challenges for social protection systems
## Quantitative information

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Employment status and working conditions

Structural characteristics:
- branch
- occupation
- company size

Individual Characteristics:
- sex
- age

Employment status:
- employment contract
- part-time work

Working conditions:
- conditions of work
- conditions of employment
Different forms of flexibility

Table 2: Different forms of flexibility

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<th>Forms of flexibility</th>
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Employees having been less than one year in the company (%) (EU)

- Indefinite contracts: 49%
- Fixed term contracts: 31%
- Temporary agency contracts: 9%
- Apprenticeship and other training skills: 6%
- Other: 5%
### Table 3  Different types of employment status in the EU countries (2000) (total population; column %)

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Non-permanent contracts

Percentage of non-permanent contracts among employees

- EU
- Belgium
- Denmark
- Germany
- Greece
- Italy
- Spain
- France
- Iceland
- Luxembourg
- Netherlands
- Portugal
- United Kingdom
- Finland
- Sweden
- Austria

- non-permanent workers in 1996
- non-permanent workers in 2000
Status and working conditions (EU)

Employees exposed to ...

- Painful positions: 45% (Indefinite contracts), 46% (Fixed-term contracts), 51% (Temp. agency contracts)
- Vibrations: 23% (Indefinite contracts), 22% (Fixed-term contracts), 29% (Temp. agency contracts)
- Noise: 30% (Indefinite contracts), 27% (Fixed-term contracts), 35% (Temp. agency contracts)
Status and working conditions/2

Employees having ...

- to work at high speed continuously
  - Indefinite contracts: 25%
  - Fixed-term contracts: 26%
  - Temp. agency contracts: 30%

- to make repetitive movements continuously
  - Indefinite contracts: 29%
  - Fixed-term contracts: 36%
  - Temp. agency contracts: 38%

- no control over pace
  - Indefinite contracts: 32%
  - Fixed-term contracts: 35%
  - Temp. agency contracts: 51%

- training
  - Indefinite contracts: 35%
  - Fixed-term contracts: 31%
  - Temp. agency contracts: 23%
Temporary agency work
Temporary Agency Work

Definition:

- Relationship between three parties – temporary agency firm, temporary worker and company availing of the service
- Temporary agency workers conclude an employment contract with the lender as an employer
Temps in Europe

- About 2 million workers, 1.3% of the working population in Europe, huge increase over the last years (double/quintupling)
- A variety of different situations in the different member states (no generalisations)
- Young people (20 – 50% under 25 years of age)
- Majority men in industry and construction sector,
- except in Scandinavian MS, where majority is women in service sector
Regulation:

- From prohibition (GR, L) until 2001, to nearly no regulation (U.K, IRL, DK, SF, S) to extensive regulations (D, B)

- Level of Regulation:
  D, A, GR: legally (exclusively)
  NL, S: framework (legal), which is realised in collective agreements.
Regulation:

- Duration:

  • in nearly all countries temporary agency workers are employed on a fixed-term basis.

  • in D, SF, GR, I, NL, E, S there are also indefinite contract versions
Working Conditions for Temporary Agency Workers

- Temporary agency work and precarious employment
- Frequent change of workplace
- Multiple (dual) “employer responsibility“
  - Employee representation
  - Health and safety at the workplace
  - The social context of the workplace
  - Human capital investment
Stylised Facts on Working Conditions for Temporary Agency Workers

- Contracts are of very short duration
- Assignments of even shorter duration
- Limited control over working time
- Some evidence of bad working conditions
- Many indications of illegal abuse
- Social security, “extras“ and seniority
- Two different sorts: good and bad temp contracts
  - Low wage/pay gaps
  - High skilled jobs/ often very good conditions/ flexibility
Working conditions of temps

- Working conditions and further training possibilities are worse for people in temporary employment

- Directive on TAW: initial training, risks etc

- However: big differences over the countries / type of job

- Works best where negotiated with trade unions,
  - eg NL
Working conditions of temporary agency workers

- by-passing the working conditions which are binding for the permanent personnel with indefinite contracts

- bonus payments, sick pay, holiday pay, further training and other social benefits

- Problem: short lending and employment times
Payment of Wages

- Despite the equality principle, considerable differences in wages can be stated between temporary agency workers and permanent employees.

- UK: only \( \pm 68\% \) of the average payment of a permanent employee.

- Nevertheless, there are countries and branches where temporary agency workers earn more than permanent employees.
Permanent Training

- Temporary agency workers avail less often of permanent training than the permanent employees

- company specific investment

- because of relationship between three parties (temporary agency firm, temporary agency worker and company availing of the service) there are almost no incentives to give further training to temporary agency workers
NL: 0,7 % of the wages have to be paid by the temporary agency firm into a fund for further training.

I, E, P: by law 1 % obligatory reserves of the wages, which the companies have to invest into further training for temporary agency workers.
Part-time work
Part-time work (by country) (2000)

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Employees working part-time (spontaneous) (by type of contract) (EU)

- Fixed term contracts: 28%
- Temporary agency workers: 25%
- Indefinite contracts: 16%
- Apprenticeship: 5%
- All employees: 18%
Flexibility and social protection
**Flexibility and social protection**

- For **employers**: social protection systems might be regarded as a burden (inappropriateness to new economic realities)
- For **workers in flexible forms of employment**: social protection systems are not always adapted to their situation (not necessarily sufficient security)
- These forms are **often stimulated by states**

- -> growing need to overcome pbs of mismatch between flexibility and security / flexicurity
Challenges posed between flexibility and security

- Not same level of security for flexible workers
- Risk of fragmentation of the labour market
- Less prone to permit flexibility than in the past
- Social protection systems themselves may feed this insecurity

-> Reflection needed!
Challenges posed between flexibility and security

- Non permanent contracts may lead to discontinued careers:
  - Hence need to look at access to
    - Unemployment benefits
    - Pensions
    - Parental leave
  - Respecting the differences between member states
## Flexi-security?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Short-term</th>
<th>Long-term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decommodification</strong></td>
<td>Temporary income to protect people from precarious situations</td>
<td>Continuation of income in the case of structural or LT events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eg unemployment benefits</td>
<td>Eg disability ben. , pensions not linked to previous LM activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employability</strong></td>
<td>Re-employment, Ilary status, FTC, integration schemes in companies</td>
<td>Dvt of personal projects that are not necessarily immediately profitable in the ST on the labour market, skills dvt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Thank you!

More information:
- [www.eurofound.eu.int](http://www.eurofound.eu.int)
- or contact: John.Hurley@eurofound.eu.int
Flexibility and working conditions

Figure 1: Flexibility and working conditions: a global research framework

Labour relations system: at corporate, sectoral and at national level

Company policy:
- strategy on flexibility
- human resources management
- occupational health and safety management

Flexibility:
- internal
- external
- quantitative
- qualitative

Working conditions:
- conditions of work
- conditions of employment

General impacts on:
- occupational safety and health
- organisational costs and benefits
- employment
- labour market organisation
- career development and employability
- social integration and exclusion

External factors: economic environment, labour market, legislation
## Conditions of work/employment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions of work</th>
<th>Conditions of employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• musculoskeletal job demands:</td>
<td>• job security: employment status and/or perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• position, loads, repetitive movements</td>
<td>• access to training and qualification</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• physical exposure:</td>
<td>• career prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• vibrations, noise, temperature</td>
<td>• duration of time and control over working time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• chemical and biological exposure</td>
<td>• level of workers direct/indirect participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• psychosocial job demands (work organisation</td>
<td>• flexible vs. fixed payment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and work content):</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• job demands (job intensity, pace of work,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monotonous work)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• job control (autonomy, support)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• emotional job demands:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• violence, discrimination, harassment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Different forms of flexibility

#### Table 2: Different forms of flexibility

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Forms of flexibility</th>
<th>Quantitative flexibility</th>
<th>Qualitative flexibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **External flexibility** | Employment status:  
  - permanent contract  
  - fixed term contract  
  - temporary agency contract  
  - seasonal work  
  - work on demand/call | Production system:  
  - subcontracting  
  - outsourcing  
  - self-employed | productive and/or geographical flexibility’  
  - Work organisation:  
  - job enrichment / job rotation  
  - team work / autonomous work  
  - multi-tasking, multi-skilling  
  - project groups  
  - responsibility of workers over: planning, budget, innovation technology |
| **Internal flexibility** | numerical flexibility  
  Working time:  
  - reduction of working hours  
  - overtime / part-time work  
  - night and shift work  
  - weekend work  
  - compressed working week  
  - varying working hours  
  - irregular / unpredictable working times | functional flexibility |
|                      | temporal flexibility |                                                                         |
### Different level of negotiation

#### Figure 2: Different areas/levels of negotiation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenarios</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Levels of negotiation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 1</td>
<td>Conditions of work</td>
<td>OSH policy and training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exposure to risk, occupational health and safety</td>
<td>National, sectoral and corporate levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 2</td>
<td>Conditions of employment (<em>Job insecurity, access to training, career prospects, pay gaps, gender segmentation</em>)</td>
<td>HRM policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Division of labour</td>
<td>Collective agreements, balanced with individual arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scenario 3</td>
<td>Work organisation</td>
<td>Job control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Job intensification or monotony</td>
<td>Corporate level, with local management agreements</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>