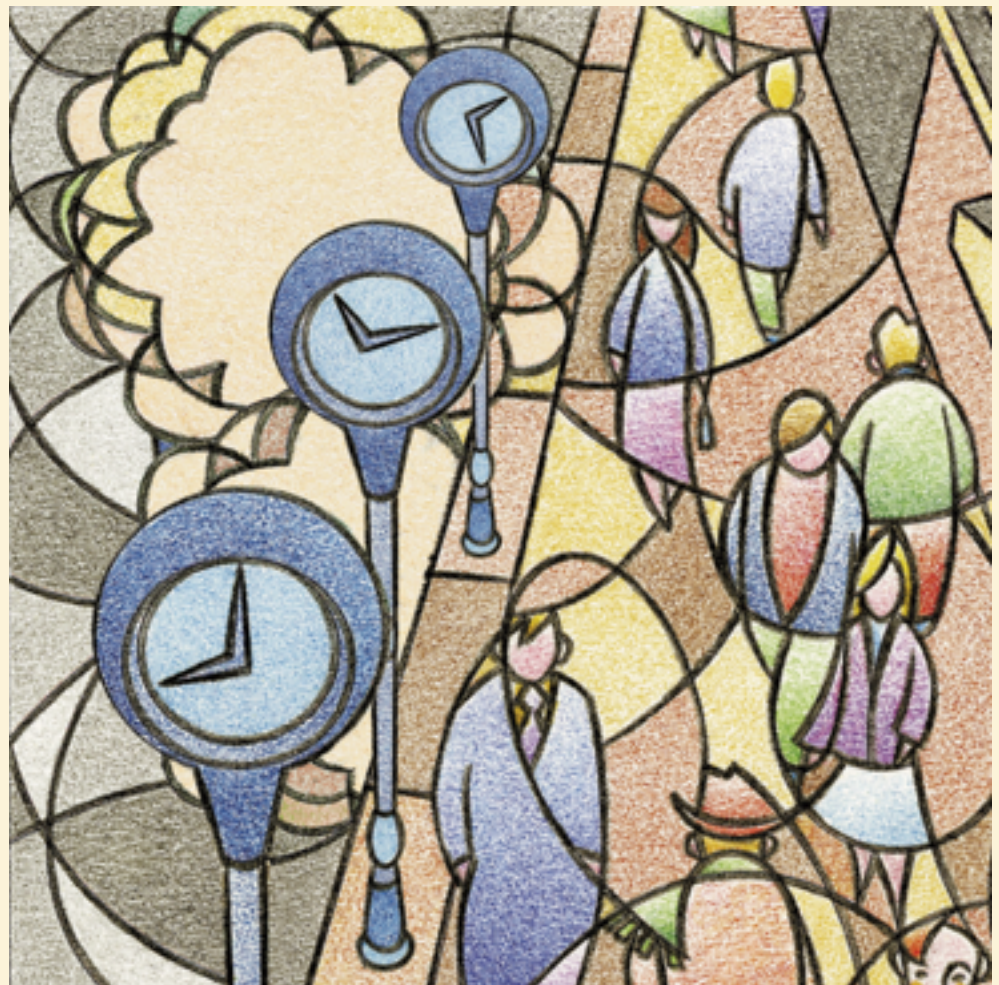




First European Quality of Life Survey: Time use and work–life options over the life course



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European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

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Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2007

ISBN 92-897-0971-5

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Printed in Denmark

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Foreword

Diversity is one of the defining features of the enlarged European Union. With the prospect of further enlargement ahead, differences such as those in living conditions, quality of life and cultural traditions are likely to be more pertinent than ever. While the nurturing of cultural diversity lies at the heart of the European ideal, fostering greater cohesion is also a central priority.

Against this background, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions has been committed to obtaining more in-depth information about how people live and how they perceive their circumstances. In 2003, the Foundation conducted fieldwork for its First European Quality of Life Survey in 28 countries: the EU25, the two acceding countries – Bulgaria and Romania – and one candidate country, Turkey. The survey was a questionnaire-based, representative household survey, which aimed to analyse how various life factors affect Europeans' quality of life. In particular, it addressed a number of key areas: employment, economic resources, housing and local environment, family and household structure, participation in the community, health and healthcare, knowledge/education and training.

The results of the Foundation's First European Quality of Life Survey were published in 2004. Since then, the Foundation has been engaged in more extensive analysis of how different aspects impact on individual quality of life in the EU. This activity has produced a series of in-depth analytical reports, which look at key components of quality of life across all 28 countries, identifying differences and similarities as well as policy implications.

This report addresses the key issue of time use and work–life options over the life course. The report aims to contribute to current debates on the subject, placing them in the wider context of 25 European countries and viewing them from a life course perspective. It considers the ways in which the institutional and policy framework can be expected to affect actual and preferred patterns of time use over the life course, focusing on distinct stages of the life course. It investigates individuals' views on available working time options, while exploring their preferences regarding measures designed to help them reconcile their different time-demanding commitments.

Alongside some interesting conclusions, including significant gender, generational and cross-country differences in time use and preferences, the report sets out some important policy recommendations. In particular, it highlights the need for an integrated life course policy – one that views the life course as a whole – arguing that simple 'activation' policies designed to increase labour market participation are not enough on their own. At the same time, it points to important challenges in this context, in particular the need to combat gender segregation in the labour market, to address the ageing problem and to increase access to lifelong learning.

We hope that the findings of this report will contribute to shaping EU policies aimed at solving such issues and at enhancing people's working lives and work–life balance throughout Europe.

Jorma Karppinen
Director

Willy Buschak
Deputy Director

Country codes

EU15

AT	Austria
BE	Belgium
DK	Denmark
FI	Finland
FR	France
DE	Germany
EL	Greece
IE	Ireland
IT	Italy
LU	Luxembourg
NL	Netherlands
PT	Portugal
ES	Spain
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

New Member States (NMS)

CZ	Czech Republic
CY	Cyprus
EE	Estonia
HU	Hungary
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
MT	Malta
PL	Poland
SK	Slovakia
SI	Slovenia

Acceding countries (situation in 2004)

BG	Bulgaria
RO	Romania

Candidate country

TR	Turkey
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Abbreviations

EQLS	European Quality of Life Survey
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
EU15	15 EU Member States (pre May 2004)
NMS	10 new Member States that joined the EU in May 2004
EU25	25 EU Member States (post May 2004)
ACC3	Two acceding countries, Bulgaria and Romania; one candidate country, Turkey

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Introduction

The analysis of time use over the life course is of growing relevance for several reasons. On the one hand, policymakers are interested to know about the current situation and developments in terms of the organisation of time in society and its societal and economic implications. At the same time, academic interest is growing in the life course perspective as an analytical framework which focuses on the dynamics of human life trajectories. From a life course perspective, it is possible to shed light on how people pass through the different stages of their lives, and on how they construct their life courses according to their social conditions and situational constraints. Moreover, it is possible to gain an insight into people's preferences and goals and into how their lives are shaped by institutional structures.

The European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, in its aim to promote working and living conditions in the European Union, is engaged in research in different areas of EU policy. In 2003, the Foundation launched the First European Quality of Life Survey (EQLS) in 28 countries – namely, the 15 'older' EU Member States (EU15), the 10 new Member States that joined the EU in May 2004 (NMS), along with the two acceding countries – Bulgaria and Romania – and one candidate country, Turkey (ACC3). Specifically, the EQLS examined six key areas of quality of life: employment; economic resources; family and households; community life and social participation; health and healthcare; and knowledge, education and training. Since the Foundation published the results of this survey in 2004, it has been engaged in more in-depth analysis of key components of quality of life, based on the initial findings of the EQLS.

Among the series of analytical reports based on these findings, this report considers the issue of time use and work–life options over the life course. The organisation of time in society as a central element of working conditions and a key influence on the quality of working life has been a long-standing area of interest and analysis for the Foundation. Against this background, the Foundation has commissioned several studies dealing with the issue of time use over the working life. The first report (Naegelé et al, 2003) illustrates recent developments in time arrangements and measures aimed at redistributing time over the working life, focusing on innovative developments in terms of time policies in the Netherlands and Denmark. A second study (Klammer and Keuzenkamp, 2005) provides empirical evidence on the current situation regarding working time options, working time arrangements and income profiles over the life course for a select group of western European countries – France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK). The study focuses on institutional arrangements in relation to relevant working time options from a life course perspective and their effects on social security arrangements. The most recent study (Anxo et al, 2006) provides concrete examples of a new organisation of time throughout the working life by analysing different innovative work biographies and new company practices.

The previous studies aim to link existing time arrangements with measures designed to improve quality of life, in this context for the purposes of setting up a conceptual framework for the assessment of the reorganisation of time throughout individuals' working lives. The studies provide an informative overview of recent welfare state approaches to a redistribution of time throughout people's working lives, placing the debate about a new organisation of time across the life course within a European policy perspective. This present reports aims to contribute to the ongoing debate and analysis, providing a systematic comparative analysis of time arrangements, actual and preferred time use patterns, and preferred and available working time options for a more favourable work–life balance, as well as analysing the extent of satisfaction from an employees' perspective across the EU.

Moreover, the report provides a comparative overview of preferences and policy demands related to different time arrangements, namely the reduction of working time; part-time work; relations between work, working time and income; various dimensions of early retirement; perceptions related to lifelong learning; and special care leave. The empirical analysis is developed in a life course perspective.

For EU policymakers, the strongest incentive for the promotion of new policies with a life course orientation is the realisation of the Lisbon Strategy objectives and hence the achievement of the employment targets set for 2010: that is, an overall employment rate of 70%, a female employment rate of 60% and of 50% among employees aged 55–64 years. Against this background, the aim of life course policies is to ensure that over the course of people's lives, they are enabled and encouraged to spend more time in employment – in other words, to enter into employment earlier, to retire later and to have fewer employment discontinuities across the life course. Policymakers agree on the need to increase the labour market participation of the working-age population with the aim of making future welfare states sustainable. However, rather than implementing 'simple' activation policies, there is a need for an integrated life course policy.

The life course perspective supports an integrated policy approach, which goes beyond the isolated consideration of specific stages in an individual's life cycle, instead covering the entire life course and taking account of the interplay of different policy areas. Principally, life course-oriented policy is concerned with enhancing flexibility in time use, allowing individuals to save and to spend their 'working life time' and to distribute it over the course of their lives as they so wish.

The idea of a more flexible working time organisation over the entire life cycle is put forward by a range of progressive concepts, which address both theoretical and policy-related concerns about a 'new organisation of working time throughout working life'. For instance, the concept of 'transitional labour markets' represents an approach to adjusting the length and organisation of working time in order to increase employment and to foster social integration (Schmid, 1998). The European Trade Union Institute also supports a concept of distributing working hours across the life course, thereby setting a limit to 'working life hours' (Boulin et al, 1999). Apart from raising employment rates, life course research underlines the necessity of facing the economic and social consequences of an ageing workforce. In this context, the 'flexibilisation' of working time over the life course is promoted as a tool for prolonging working life on a voluntary basis and thus decreasing early exit (Naegele, 1999). Proposals for future time policy include the following possibilities for organising working time over the life cycle: temporary reduction of working time; regulated part-time work; parental or sabbatical leave; working time accounts; lifelong learning; and flexible, phased retirement. However, despite increasing efforts to develop ideas for an innovative reorganisation of working time over the life course in Europe, an integrated approach to effective life course policy – which involves different policy areas and views the life course as a whole rather than solely focusing on important sub-issues, such as youth unemployment or female labour force participation – has not yet been established.

Most crucially, an integrated life course policy should not only aim to foster activity rates in all age groups, but to enable a better work–life balance (Kapitány et al, 2005). In this context, life course policy needs to take account of people's preferences for a more even distribution of time spent on paid and unpaid work, and on training, over the entire lifespan. This is of particular importance against the backdrop of an increased individualisation, and hence flexibilisation, of life courses, in which

work, learning, caring and free time can be organised simultaneously. Individuals have more freedom to choose their life trajectories. In some, albeit not all, countries, people can choose from an ever-expanding variety of options enabling them to combine paid work with other activities; such options include part-time work, flexible work schedules, working from home, temporary leave from the labour market (for example, childcare leave or sabbaticals) or phased retirement. However, while these possibilities allow individuals to construct their life course in a flexible manner, the take-up of some of these options may be accompanied by risks for career development and social security. Thus, the positive aspects of increased opportunities for individuals to autonomously organise their lives may be undermined by the social and financial risks of increased personal responsibility. In any event, in the effort to tailor time options to the needs of individuals, it is crucial to gain an insight into their preferences in terms of time use over the life course. This is among the aims of this study, which apart from looking at actual time use across Europe, investigates individuals' options and preferences in relation to possible time arrangements and policy measures.

Outline of report

Cross-national comparative studies have shown that particular institutional arrangements are related to national variations in the extent and form of men's and women's labour market participation. These include general debates about welfare state regimes and women's employment levels, such as those proposed by Esping-Andersen (Esping-Andersen, 1990), along with research which has focused in greater detail on gender relations under different welfare state regimes (Lewis 1992, 2002; Sainsbury, 1996). Recent studies have focused more on the dynamic aspects of people's lives and show how the life course is embedded within the larger institutional framework – for instance, how the transition from school to work, family formation, retirement behaviour and other life course outcomes are shaped by the organisation of policies and institutional structures (Blossfeldt et al, 1998; Nazio et al, 2003; Shanahan, 2000). The general message is that part of the cross-national variation in the patterns of time use over the life course may be ascribed to institutional factors, such as the design of family and social policies, the education and training system, the availability and cost of childcare facilities, labour market conditions, working time regimes and income structure. However, owing to the complexity of the ways in which interplaying institutional structures may shape people's life course, and the fact that the life course consists of a series of distinct phases and transitions, each of which is shaped in varying ways by a different mix of institutional structures, it is almost impossible to construct a typology of institutional systems that can adequately explain the variation in life course patterns across countries. For this reason, life course research is highly fragmented, with most studies focusing on specific transitions in a small set of countries and dealing with a very specific set of institutional structures as explanatory factors. The present study aims to contribute to current debates on whether it is possible to detect national 'life course regimes' (Mayer, 2004), or in other words, whether national patterns of life course trajectories exist and whether their different logics can be argued to reflect the overall institutional structure.

This present study focuses on 25 of the 28 countries European countries covered in the EQLS. Based on comparative survey evidence, it aims to shed light on cross-national differences in time use in the EU15 (with the exception of Luxembourg), the NMS (with the exception of Cyprus and Malta) and the ACC3. In doing so, the study has the advantage of drawing on a wider range of countries than before as part of the aim to link specific dimensions of institutional structures to life course patterns.

The report is structured as follows. Firstly, it sets out the analytical approach taken in this particular context in the study of time use over the life course. This is followed by an overview of the institutional settings that are likely to shape actual and preferred time use in different life course phases in the 25 countries under consideration. Based on established national differences, the report then formulates hypotheses about the ways in which the institutional and policy framework can be expected to affect actual and preferred patterns of time use over the life course, focusing on the following three distinct stages of the life course:

- the ‘labour market entrance and pre-parental phase’ (or ‘entrance phase’), when individuals do not have any caring responsibilities as of yet but enter the family formation phase, at the same time possibly encountering problems entering the labour market;
- the ‘main working and parenting phase’, typically termed the ‘rush hour of life’ (Groot et al, 2004; Naegele et al, 2003), in which the time demands of family and working life may come into conflict with each other;
- the ‘empty nest and pre-retirement phase’ (or ‘late phase’) when children have left the home and people start to retire from the labour market.

The empirical part of the study, which draws on comparative survey evidence on actual and preferred time use in the 25 countries, obtained from the 2003 Eurobarometer survey and the Candidate Countries Eurobarometer (CCEB) survey 2003, has two major aims. Firstly, it establishes national patterns of time use over the life course in terms of paid and unpaid work, as well as in relation to training activities. Through this aim, it formulates a stylised life course typology, tracing ‘typical’ life trajectories. As part of this approach, it aims to assess the influence of the societal context on gendered time use over the life course. Subsequently, based on the investigation of cross-national differences in time use over the life course, the report aims to arrive at a typology of ‘life course regimes’ which borrows from the research of Mayer (2004) and which encompasses a wider range of countries. A second step investigates individuals’ views on available working time options and looks at their preferences regarding measures that may help them reconcile their different time-demanding commitments and needs in different life course phases. For instance, the report assesses the importance that individuals attach to flexible working hours, reduced working hours or career breaks in different stages of the life course. Finally, based on the study’s findings on actual time use and on the availability and desirability of different working time options across Europe, with reference to working time options and arrangements in Sweden as a case study, the report concludes by outlining several life course policy recommendations for the future.

Analytical approach

The life course perspective is an analytical framework that focuses on the dynamics of human life trajectories. It moves away from a static approach to one that is capable of shedding light on how people pass through the main stages of their lives, while looking at the ways in which institutional structures may shape major life course transitions and the timing of major life events, such as early education, the transition from school to work, partnership formation, cohabitation, marriage, childbirth and retirement. With respect to cross-national comparative analyses of time use in particular, the life course perspective is indispensable in that it links individual behaviour to the relevant institutional setting (for a description of institutional settings, see Chapter 1). Moreover, the life course perspective also recognises the individual’s role in life course formation, as well as the

potential role of societal norms and value systems. Lastly, it supports an integrated policy approach that goes beyond the isolated consideration of specific stages in individuals' life cycles and which covers the whole life course and different policy areas. Policy instruments cover family and social policy, the labour market, retirement and tax policy, early education and lifelong learning.

In order to map the profile of time use among men and women at different points in their lives, the study uses a variant of the family cycle approach, originally developed by Glick (1947) and recently adapted for the purposes of life course analyses conducted by Dominique Anxo and his colleagues (2006). In this present study, a set of family models are selected which coincide with the most central transitions and phases in the life course, such as the transition from school to work (young childless singles), the formation of a partnership (young cohabiting couples without children), parenting (cohabiting couples with children, differentiated according to the age of children), and the later stage when children have left the home and people start to retire (older childless people). This sequencing of major life events makes it possible to identify, analyse and visualise the major transitions during individuals' life courses and to compare the patterns of time use in terms of labour market involvement, the amount of time spent on unpaid household and caring work, and the amount of time used for further training and education across countries.

However, the report also acknowledges the fact that the archetypal three-stage life course (education – work – retirement) is undergoing major structural changes. The standard pattern of initial training followed by continuous full-time employment over a period of more than 40 years, after which a person retires, may have ceased to be the norm, even for male employees. In recent decades, for example, the active working phase has been shrinking, while time spent in education or retirement has started to increase. Furthermore, new possibilities have emerged for combining employment with other time commitments, such as unpaid care work or training activities, adding to the emergence of life courses in which learning, work and caring decreasingly follow the classical chronological sequence. As it is typically argued, recent decades have witnessed a 'flexibilisation and individualisation of working time over the life course' (Naegele et al, 2003), not only for women but also increasingly for men. As a result of the de-standardisation of the 'normal biography', a growing number of individuals no longer follow a stylised family cycle. For instance, the level of lone parenthood or childlessness has begun to increase over the life course. For this reason, the current analysis has been extended to cover not only the typical stages in the stylised life course – for example, childless single people in full-time education, followed by a transition to home ownership, partnership formation, the main parenting phase in a coupled union and finally to retirement – but also encompasses single parents and those who remain childless throughout their adult lives.

Different life course stages

1

Main phases

'Entrance phase'

In recent decades, rapid educational expansion has been witnessed across many European countries. This expansion has, in turn, had a large impact on how the transition from school to work tends to be organised, with a growing trend towards prolonged periods of time being spent in the educational system. Therefore, as is frequently argued, it is possible to speak of an increasing trend towards the 'upskilling' of labour market entrants. However, at the same time, youth unemployment has emerged as one of the major problems of many contemporary European societies.¹ As a result, the transition from school to work has also become more precarious and less predictable. It is crucial, therefore, to gain an insight into the way in which education, training and labour market systems interact to shape the transition from school to work in Europe.

Due to differences in education and training systems, along with disparities in the availability of employment opportunities to young people and in the cost of setting up one's own household, significant differences have emerged in patterns of transition to adulthood across the different countries. For example, the timing of transitions from school to work differs hugely across Europe (see, for example, Breen and Buchmann, 2002). While Germany's dual education-work system facilitates the transition from school to work, in many southern European countries the educational system does not successfully channel young people into the labour market, but often leaves them in unemployment for a long time (Breen and Buchmann, 2002).

Also strongly related to such cross-national differences are the different patterns observed in relation to young people leaving their parents' home. While an early exit pattern prevails in northern Europe, late exit and even partnering in the parental household tend to be quite common in southern Europe (Saraceno and Olagnero, 2004). Against this background, it remains uncertain whether the young childless state can be termed the 'playtime of life', as is frequently referred to in previous literature (Groot and Breedveld, 2004). The entrance phase – that is, the labour market entrance and pre-parental phase – is not necessarily a period that is simply characterised by the absence of 'care problems'; indeed, it can also involve difficult transitions, economic risks and considerable uncertainty (Breen and Buchman, 2002; Buchman, 1989). Because of the precarious links with the labour market, residential autonomy and family formation may be postponed (Brannen et al, 2002; Nilsen et al, 2002; Torres, Mendes and Lapa, 2006).

'Rush hour of life' phase

The main problems and issues concerning the 'rush hour of life' phase – that is, the main working and parenting phase – include the management of conflicting demands of work and family experienced in furthering one's career, investing in lifelong learning, and taking care of children and other dependants, such as elderly relatives. Such conflicts, it is argued, have become increasingly problematic in light of the decline of the 'male breadwinner, female full-time carer' model (see, for example, Blossfeldt and Drobnic, 2002; Ellingsaeter, 1999). On account of different institutional, economical and cultural contexts (Uunk, 2005), employment patterns and the extent to which they are gender differentiated vary considerably across Europe. For example, it is well established in

¹ In many countries, the educational attainment of women has surpassed that of men. Nevertheless, in a range of European countries, especially in southern Europe, young women are still less likely to participate in the labour market and to experience upward occupational mobility than men.

existing literature that female employment rates tend to be higher in countries which actively support the employment of women with children through the provision of a subsidised, publicly financed childcare system, thus enabling parents to balance paid work with family commitments. This can be observed, for instance, in the Nordic countries. However, in many European countries, mothers of small children lack such support systems; as a result, the presence of children still has a strong, negative effect on women's participation in the labour market.

Nonetheless, the time use patterns of women and men are said to have converged gradually, as more women enter the labour market, although women still do the bulk of unpaid work in most households, irrespective of the extent of their paid work involvement. Hence, for women in particular, the main working and parenting phase is characterised by a double burden of work and family commitments ('rush hour of life'). These women's overall workload is therefore likely to be higher than the workload faced by women in the young childless state or in the active senior phase.

Households with caring responsibilities not only face time pressures, but also an increased financial risk arising from the widespread withdrawal of mothers from the labour market. In this context, policymakers should bear in mind that two dimensions of possible work–life imbalance from a life course perspective can emerge in the 'rush hour of life' phase: namely, time pressure and a risk of poverty (Naegele et al, 2003). Another important issue in this context is whether individuals actually decide to enter the 'rush hour of life'. In countries where the combination of work and family life is not facilitated institutionally, fertility rates tend to be very low (Torres et al, 2001; Torres, 2006).

'Late phase'

Demographic trends such as more prolonged educational phases, low fertility rates and longer life expectancy put enormous pressure on the sustainability of social security and welfare systems. However, in most European countries, governments have favoured definitive outflows from the labour force for older employees since the 1970s and 1980s, when early labour market exit was often used as a measure to adjust to social and economic pressures. Thus, the institutional establishment of pension systems and other benefit schemes have encouraged people to withdraw from the labour market at a relatively early age (OECD, 2005c). Interestingly, the countries with the lowest effective retirement age also appear to have among the lowest female participation and fertility rates (Bovenberg, 2005, p. 406).

One of the crucial aims of life course policy – and a central issue of the late or 'empty nest and pre-retirement phase' – is avoiding a further compression of the working life course through earlier exit from the labour market, along with its negative impact on the sustainability of social security systems and the increased risks of poverty among older people. However, tackling the problem of early exit from the labour market requires more than the implementation of pension reforms, which are essentially restricted to changes in the regulatory framework of eligibility for early retirement and benefit schemes. From a life course perspective, it is crucial to take into consideration the fact that in order to motivate employees and employers to opt for later retirement, the working conditions of older employees need to be improved. Most importantly, policymakers need to tackle the well-established problem whereby older employees are less likely to receive further training than their younger counterparts (Gelderblom et al, 2003). In order to retain employees in the labour market for longer, workers need to be able to upgrade their skills and to retrain (Gallie, 2002). Another issue relates to the fact that people who are in the later phase of their life are more likely to experience

health problems, particularly those who were engaged in strenuous physical work during their core working age. The latter issue may be more significant in some countries than in others, depending on the industrial structure and the associated working conditions (health and safety provisions).

Institutional context

The varying structural contexts found across Europe, and in particular the differing levels of institutional support for continuous employment, should help to explain the country differences that exist in time use over the life course. In order to provide a more comprehensive picture of the 25 countries under consideration, the countries have been categorised mainly according to their geographical location. For western Europe, the countries have been categorised more or less in line with Esping-Andersen's typology of welfare state regimes (1990, 1992); the latter is still relevant for mapping different institutional conditions across Europe, particularly when dealing with the characteristics of social security systems and labour markets, as well as the diverse patterns of female labour market participation. Accordingly, the countries are categorised according to the following types of regimes:

- Nordic regimes (Denmark, Finland, Sweden);
- Liberal regimes (Ireland, UK);
- Continental regimes (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Netherlands);
- Mediterranean regimes (Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain).

It should be added that until now, research has mainly focused on work–time policies in the EU15 countries. As a result, there has been a shortage of comparative studies, albeit an increasing interest, in the NMS and ACC3 countries, both of which are also included in this analysis.

This particular section provides a broad overview of labour market and socioeconomic characteristics, along with aggregate life course outcomes, in 25 countries. The overview is structured according to the three main life course phases and transitions. Firstly, in order to explain time use in the 'labour market entrance and pre-parental phase', the report looks at country differences in enrolment rates in higher education and youth (un)employment rates. Secondly, the analysis explores the paid work involvement of men and women in their 'main working and parenting phase', looking at average weekly working hours, overall and part-time employment rates, and unemployment rates among the core working age population. Moreover, in an effort to help explain cross-national differences with regard to parental employment, the analysis examines national levels of support for continuous employment among parents, particularly mothers. Thirdly, it looks at the employment patterns among those in the 'empty nest and pre-retirement phase', focusing on cross-national differences in retirement behaviour and on unemployment risks for older workers.

Institutional context of 'entrance phase'

The decision to enter the labour market typically occurs after the person completes their initial education. However, this can vary across European countries. While in the Mediterranean countries the exit from the education system and entry into the labour market tends to start relatively early, it is often postponed in other countries, such as in Denmark, Germany or France. However, this has not led to higher youth employment rates among the Mediterranean countries. On the contrary, while the employment rate among those aged under 25 years is almost 60% in Denmark, it is less than 30% in Italy and Greece. This finding can be attributed to the problem of youth unemployment, which hampers the increase in employment rates with age. Furthermore, significant increases in labour

market activity can be observed in some countries before the end of education. This is particularly evident in the case of Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden and the UK, where the share of young people combining education and paid work is comparatively high, reaching 20% in some age groups (Couppié et al, 2001).

A cross-country comparison of youth employment rates shows that the proportion of young people in employment is much lower in southern and eastern European countries than in the northern European countries. Southern European countries are generally characterised by high youth unemployment rates, with the exception of Portugal, where young people seem to experience a much lower risk of unemployment. In some countries, a ‘transitory youth unemployment regime’ can be observed, whereby high unemployment levels exist among very young people, but where a progressive fall in unemployment levels can be observed with age, as can be seen in Greece, Spain, Italy, France and Finland. The most extreme example of this can be observed in Spain, where unemployment levels peak among those aged 25 years and where the unemployment level among those aged 30 years is still higher than that of the general population (Couppié et al, 2001). Such findings are an indication of the widespread difficulties that young people face in trying to secure a job. In contrast, relatively low levels of youth unemployment can be found in Denmark, Germany, Austria and the Netherlands. In these countries, young people do not tend to encounter as many difficulties in accessing jobs.

Conversely, among the former socialist countries, Bulgaria and Poland stand out as having the highest youth unemployment rates in Europe. In these countries, young people face difficulties in making the transition from education to work because the educational system does not yet supply the skills required in the market economy. Moreover, employers are unwilling to bear the costs of on-the-job training, while seniority rules and the power of insiders seem to offer greater protection to older employees (Nesporova, 2002).

In countries where the transition from education to work is most difficult because of a lack of employment opportunities, the transition from the parental home to one’s own home also seems to occur at a relatively late age, as does the timing of their first union; similarly, low fertility rates can be observed in such countries (Saraceno and Olagnero, 2004). This mainly affects the southern European countries, along with some central and eastern European countries. In terms of the average age at which people leave home, Italy ranks highest (27 years of age for men and 24 years for women), followed by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Portugal. At the opposite end of the scale, young people in Sweden leave home at a much earlier age, on average at 20 years of age among men and at 19 years of age among women; a similar situation can be observed in Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Lithuania, Slovenia and the UK (Billeri et al, 2001). Thus, while an early transition to an independent household, early timing of the first partnership formation and relatively high fertility rates tend to be found in the Nordic countries and liberal regimes as well as in most continental European countries (less so in Belgium and the Netherlands), in the southern European countries a pattern of late home departure seems more evident. The situation in eastern Europe is more mixed, however, and cannot be generalised.

Nordic regimes

Relatively high youth employment rates can be found in Denmark and Sweden. In Finland, due to the problem of youth unemployment, labour market entrants tend to experience greater difficulties

in finding a job than people of core working age. The duration of initial education tends to be quite long in all three Nordic countries. However, it also is common practice in these countries for young people to combine their studies with paid work, especially in Denmark, where a dual education system with occupation-specific training can be observed.

Continental regimes

In some continental European countries, such as Austria and in particular the Netherlands, young people enter employment at an early age; however, in other continental countries such as Germany (east), Belgium and France, people enter the labour market at a markedly later stage. Low youth employment rates in the latter group of countries may be ascribed to a relatively high youth unemployment rate. The initial education phase tends to be somewhat shorter in continental Europe than in the Nordic countries, but longer than that in the liberal or Mediterranean countries. In Austria, Germany and the Netherlands, which operate (dual) systems of occupationally specific training at secondary level, it is common for students to combine initial education and training with employment.

Liberal regimes

Both Ireland and the UK are characterised by high levels of labour market participation among its young population. This is due to the relatively low level of youth unemployment, along with the relatively short duration of initial education when compared with the Nordic countries. However, the transition from education to work is less smooth in the liberal countries than in many of the coordinated market economies of central Europe. Those entering the labour market for the first time are less successful in securing stable jobs in the primary labour market and can often experience excessive 'job hopping' at the start of their careers (Gangl, 2000).

Mediterranean regimes

Southern European countries are characterised by low youth employment rates, particularly in Greece and Italy. This is mainly the result of a severe lack of employment opportunities for young people, rather than a long period of initial education. Young people in southern Europe, even those who are better educated, face great difficulties in entering the labour market. With the notable exception of Portugal, the youth unemployment figure represents around a quarter of those aged under 25 years (Table 1).

NMS regimes

As with Greece and Italy, the NMS is characterised by an exceptionally low youth employment rate, at 30% or lower among those aged below 25 years (Table 1). In many countries, this may be simply attributed to the problem of youth unemployment, which is most severe in Poland, Slovakia and Lithuania. However, in the case of Poland and Slovenia, the duration of initial education helps to explain the low youth employment rates.

ACC3 regimes

Youth employment rates are also considerably low in the ACC3 (Table 1). This is due to the high levels of youth unemployment, particularly in Bulgaria, where an unemployment rate of almost 40% is recorded among those below 25 years of age. Such a finding is observed despite the fact that people tend to leave the educational system at a comparatively early age. In fact, the proportion of under

25-year-olds who are still in education in Bulgaria (44%) is lower than that of any other European country, with the exception of Romania (42%).

Table 1 Employment and education levels of young people, by country, %

	Youth employment rate (<25 years) ¹	Youth unemployment rate (<25 years) ¹	Pupils and students aged 15–24 years as % of population of corresponding age ²	Expectancy of duration of initial education of five-year-olds ³	Proportion of young population (aged 25–29 years) in education ⁴
Nordic countries					
Denmark	59.4	9.8	62	18	40.2
Finland	38.5	21.6	68	19	27.1
Sweden	45.0	13.8	65	20	22.8
Continental countries					
Austria	50.7	7.5	51	16	12.5
Belgium	27.1	19.0	65	19	8.9
France	24.1	20.2	61	17	18.6
Germany	42.4	10.6	63	17	17.9
Netherlands	68.4	6.6	63	17	6.2
Liberal countries					
Ireland	45.8	7.6	53	17	4.8
UK	59.8	11.5	54	20	15.0
Mediterranean countries					
Greece	26.3	25.1	56	16	6.9
Italy	26.0	26.3	48	17	15.6
Portugal	38.4	14.6	52	17	11.7
Spain	36.8	22.7	57	17	15.4
NMS					
Czech Republic	31.4	17.6	52	16	3.0
Estonia	27.1	24.5	62	18	
Hungary	26.7	13.4	52	17	12.6
Latvia	29.0	22.9	59	17	
Lithuania	22.9	30.9	65	17	
Poland	19.6	43.0	63	17	17.3
Slovakia	27.6	33.1	46	15	2.6
Slovenia	30.3	15.7	63	17	
ACC3					
Bulgaria	21.0	39.3	44	15	
Romania	32.7	17.6	42	15	
Turkey	30.5	20.5	n.a.	n.a.	3.7

¹Source: OECD (2005b) – data are for 2003; data for Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia are from the national Labour Force Survey (LFS) and refer to the second quarter of 2001 (Eurostat, 2003b).

²Source: Eurostat – Education statistics (UOE) for 2000/2001. Data refers to ISCED level 1–6, except for Germany and Italy, where data exclude ISCED level 6. For Greece, the reference date for the population is 1 January 2000 (Eurostat, 2003a).

³Source: Eurostat, UOE and population statistics: ‘expectancy’ is an estimate of the number of years a typical five-year-old child can expect to be enrolled in the education system during his or her lifetime, if current enrolment patterns remain unchanged (see Eurydice at <http://www.eurydice.org/portal/page/portal/Eurydice>).

⁴Source: OECD (2005a) – data are for 2003, except in the case of the Netherlands and Italy, for which data refer to 2002.

Institutional context of 'rush hour of life' phase

This section outlines the main working time practices observed during the 'rush hour of life' stage as well as the structural factors that are likely to have an impact on gendered employment patterns. Firstly, it looks at the employment and unemployment rates of those in the core working age group, that is, people aged 25–54 years, as well as the patterns of gendered labour market integration (for example, rates of part-time work among women), which vary considerably across Europe. Secondly, it looks at national levels of support for employment among mothers, drawing on indicators of publicly funded childcare support.

Before the comparative overview, it is worth referring to the literature describing the links between the 'three worlds of welfare capitalism' (Esping-Andersen, 1990) and the respective 'worlds of working time' (Burgoon and Baxandall, 2004). The social democratic, liberal and Christian democratic regime types differ in their approach to the regulation of working time and therefore exhibit distinct working time practices. While the social democratic regimes of the Nordic countries have a long tradition of working time reduction and foster women's full inclusion in the labour market, governments in the liberal regimes have traditionally abstained from regulating working time, thus exhibiting a 'long hours culture', as well as deeply gendered working time practices, with men working particularly long hours and women often confined to short, part-time jobs. Nonetheless, both of these regimes exhibit high levels of employment. What distinguishes them, among other things, is the finding that social democratic regimes tend to favour a strong inclusion of women in the labour market and provide favourable levels of state support for employment of women with children (for example, extensive childcare services), while the liberal regimes show a lack of support for maternal employment, with female part-time workers constituting a heavily disadvantaged segment of the labour force. Christian democratic welfare regimes resemble the social democratic regimes in their tradition of working time reduction for those in employment. However, employment rates tend to be lower, especially among women. This is due to the fact that Christian democratic regimes lend themselves to the preservation of the traditional model of the family, with a strong focus on the male breadwinner in full-time employment. The following overview extends this categorisation by looking at the sub-protected welfare regime of southern Europe and at the regimes of the post-socialist countries.

Working time regimes and employment among core working age group*Nordic regimes*

The Nordic regimes tend to exhibit high employment and low unemployment levels (Table 2). Working time policies favour reduced working hours; as a result, compared with other countries, there is a very low incidence of long working hours in these countries. The majority of full-time workers have a standard working week of 40 hours. The level of part-time work among women is moderate, but tends to involve longer hours than the part-time work typically performed in continental Europe and especially in the Netherlands and the UK.

Continental regimes

In continental Europe, employment rates of the core working age group tend to be similar to the level found in the Nordic countries. The weekly working hours of full-time workers are moderate. Part-time work is common among female workers, especially in the Dutch part-time society. However, it varies between countries, ranging from 23% in France to 60% in the Netherlands, and often involves much shorter hours than those observed in the Nordic countries. In conservative regimes in particular, the take-up of part-time work entails a risk of poverty, as their social insurance systems are oriented towards the principle of equivalence. The risk of becoming unemployed varies greatly

between the countries: for example, in east Germany unemployment levels are high, while in the Netherlands unemployment levels are very low.

Liberal regimes

Employment rates in Anglo-Saxon countries are comparable to those found in continental Europe. Liberal welfare regimes keep labour market regulation to a minimum (Burgoon and Baxandall, 2004), which results in long working hours for men and a highly flexible labour market. These models imply higher levels of average paid working time for employees, particularly among working men in the UK. Part-time jobs are widespread among women. However, these regimes are characterised by a relatively low unemployment rate.

Mediterranean regimes

Compared with the Nordic and continental or Anglo-Saxon countries, southern European countries exhibit a much lower employment rate among the core working age group and a higher unemployment rate, peaking at around 10% in Spain. Working hours are particularly long for full-time workers in Greece, but average at around 40 weekly hours in all other Mediterranean countries. These countries exhibit rather low female employment rates and, with the exception of Italy, a low incidence of part-time work among women. However, Portugal does not follow the trend of the Mediterranean countries: instead, it features a high overall employment rate and continuous female labour market participation.

NMS regimes

Employment rates in the NMS are highest in Slovenia and the Czech Republic (above 80%) and lowest in Poland (around 68%). Due to economic restructuring of the transition economies, unemployment represents a significant problem in most of these countries, with the exception of Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic. Some NMS countries are characterised by very long working hours among full-time workers, as can be seen in the Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland and Slovenia. In Lithuania, by contrast, the average weekly working hours are as low as those found in the Nordic countries. In all of the NMS countries, female part-time work appears to be relatively unimportant.

ACC3 regimes

In Turkey, only about half of the core working age population is in gainful employment. The low overall employment rates can be partly attributed to high unemployment levels, but are also strongly related to the exclusion of mothers from the labour market. Bulgaria is characterised by low employment rates among the core working age group, mainly owing to the problem of unemployment. In Romania, employment rates are higher than those of the other ACC3 countries, as they face a relatively low risk of unemployment.

Employment-supportive policy and parental labour market participation

Policymakers have a strong interest in increasing women's labour market participation. The Lisbon targets of 2000 state that the percentage of women in employment in the EU should be raised to 60% by 2010 (referring to the working age population). However, by 2003, only seven of the countries considered in this analysis – Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, the UK, Austria and Portugal – had met the Lisbon target. While Estonia and Germany came very close to the target, Spain, Poland, Greece and Italy have remained far behind the target levels (Plantenga and Remery, 2005).

Table 2 Employment levels and trends of core working age group, by sex and country, 2003 (%)

	Employment rate (25–54 years old)*		Unemployment rate (25–54 years old)*	Average weekly working hours of full-time workers** (15–64 years old)	Part-time employment (subjective declaration) as % of total employment** (15–64 years old)		Part-time employment (<30 hours) as % of total employment*** (15–64 years old)	
	Men	Women			Men	Women	Men	Women
EU25				41.7	6.6	30.3		
Nordic countries								
Denmark	88.0	78.9	5.0	40.3	11.4	32.0	10.5	21.9
Finland	83.3	78.8	7.3	40.6	8.3	17.8	8.0	15.0
Sweden	85.3	81.7	4.9	40.8	11.3	35.4	7.9	20.5
Continental countries								
Austria	90.1	76.7	4.2	41.5	4.8	35.3	3.2	26.1
Belgium	84.4	67.7	7.0	41.3	6.3	39.7	5.9	33.4
France	87.0	71.6	8.1	40.7	5.5	29.9	4.7	22.7
Germany	84.2	72.0	9.1	41.0	6.1	40.8	5.9	36.3
Netherlands	90.7	74.0	3.1	40.6	22.0	74.2	14.8	59.6
Liberal countries								
Ireland	87.0	65.1	3.9	40.9	6.7	31.3	7.5	34.3
UK	87.6	74.1	3.8	43.7	10.4	44.2	9.6	40.1
Mediterranean countries								
Greece	89.3	56.6	8.3	44.3	2.1	7.4	2.9	10.2
Italy	86.5	54.9	7.2	40.5	3.3	17.2	4.9	23.6
Portugal	88.0	74.2	5.7	41.6	7.1	17.3	5.9	14.9
Spain	86.0	56.5	10.2	41.6	2.7	17.4	2.5	16.5
NMS								
Czech Republic	89.7	73.5	7.0	43.1	2.3	8.5	1.6	5.3
Estonia	79.5	72.2	11.5	41.6	5.5	10.6		
Hungary	80.1	67.4	5.3	41.4	2.8	6.1	2.1	5.1
Latvia	76.8	75.1	12.1	43.8	6.5	13.7		
Lithuania	74.6	76.4	15.3	39.4	7.0	11.2		
Poland	73.0	62.1	17.3	43.4	7.9	13.1	7.1	16.8
Slovakia	80.5	71.5	15.1	41.0	1.3	3.7	1.3	3.6
Slovenia	87.5	80.0	4.6	42.6	4.9	8.5		
ACC3								
Bulgaria	69.3	66.8	17.6	41.3	2.0	2.9		
Romania	83.5	71.7	6.3	41.8	11.1	13.0		
Turkey	79.9	27.4	8.7	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3.6	12.3

* Source: OECD (2005b) – data are for 2003; employment rate is defined according to the employment/population ratio, i.e. as persons aged 25–54 years in employment divided by the population of corresponding age; unemployment rate is defined as persons aged 25–54 years who are unemployed divided by the labour force of corresponding age. For Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia, data are from the national LFS and refer to the second quarter of 2001 (Eurostat, 2003b).

** Source: Eurostat (see <http://epp.eurostat.cec.eu.int> [accessed January 2007]). The average number of hours corresponds to the number of hours the person normally works. This covers all hours including extra hours, either paid or unpaid, which the person normally works. It excludes commuting time and meal breaks. The distinction between full-time and part-time work is made on the basis of a spontaneous answer given by the respondent.

*** Source: OECD (2005b); part-time employment refers to regular working hours of less than 30 hours a week in the main job.

As evidence shows that countries with extensive childcare provision have higher female participation rates, targets were also set with regard to childcare (Barcelona summit, 2002). By 2010, Member States should provide childcare to 90% of children aged between three years and the mandatory school age, and to 33% of children under three years old. As shown in Table 3, a number of countries meet the Barcelona target for the first age group (children aged between three years and the mandatory school age), namely Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, Italy and Slovakia. Meanwhile, Sweden, Spain, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Romania and east Germany come fairly close to the target. Furthest from the target for childcare provision are Poland, Lithuania and Greece, where the coverage rate is less than 50%. With respect to the second target of childcare for 33% of children under three years old, Denmark, Sweden and Slovakia meet the target, while France and Belgium come close. In the other countries, with the exception of Finland, Germany (east), Estonia and Slovenia, the coverage rate is less than 15%.

The literature on work–care balance has traditionally focused on maternity benefits and childcare as the key to a successful reconciliation between parenthood and employment. It is also well established that labour market institutions facilitating women’s exit and entry into the labour market lead not only to higher female employment levels, but also to higher fertility rates. Fertility rates have dropped drastically, particularly in the southern European countries (Bovenberg, 2005). The specific contexts and outcomes in terms of the labour market participation of mothers are summarised here according to the different regime types.

Nordic regimes

The Nordic regimes foster high female labour market participation levels through flexible and generous parental leave systems, coupled with a highly subsidised and extensive publicly financed childcare system. As a consequence, employment levels among mothers are high. This ‘success story’ of work–care balance helps to explain why fertility rates are among the highest in Europe in the Nordic countries. Finland differs from Denmark and Sweden in that mothers are less likely to be in paid work when children are under three years of age.

Continental regimes

In continental Europe, particularly in conservative welfare regimes, long parental leave, high income taxes for secondary earners and a shortage of childcare institutions lead to high levels of part-time work among women, but generally to low maternal employment rates. However, due to differences in the public provision of care, the gender polarisation with regard to working time is clearly higher in Germany and the Netherlands than in France. The latter country provides for more extensive public childcare support; moreover, part-time work among women is, albeit rising in importance, less common than in the other continental European countries.

Liberal regimes

In the UK and Ireland, a severe shortage of childcare facilities is apparent; as a result, mothers of children under school-going age are less often in employment than their Nordic and continental European counterparts. When children reach school-going age, employment rates increase significantly among mothers in the UK, but still remain at a very low level in Ireland. Furthermore, a higher gender polarisation of working time is apparent in these countries, with many men working longer full-time hours and women confined to marginal part-time jobs (see also Anxo and O’Reilly, 2002).

Mediterranean regimes

The residual welfare regimes of southern Europe exhibit the highest incidence of the traditional male breadwinner model. Whereas younger women or single women without children tend to work full

time, a high proportion of mothers leave the labour market, often permanently. In these regimes, there is a strong reliance on the family and especially on women as homemakers and care providers. Public provision of childcare facilities is low and there is a lack of part-time opportunities for women. Portugal is the exception in this instance, as it exhibits relatively high maternal employment rates – which are atypical in a southern European context; this can be attributed to specific historical reasons, such as the colonial war (1961–1974) (Torres, 2006).

NMS regimes

It is difficult to discern a regional pattern among the former socialist countries. While policies in Slovenia are strongly supportive of maternal employment (Sicherl et al, 2003; Stropnik, 2001), Hungary and the Czech Republic encourage a transitional model, providing generous support for the home care of children up to the age of three or four years, while the majority of children above this age are cared for in kindergarten, thus allowing for the full-time employment of mothers (see, for example, Koncz, 2002; Herczog, 2000; Stropnik, 2001). Latvia, Lithuania and Poland stand out as the countries which provide the least support for maternal employment in terms of care facilities.

ACC3 regimes

In the least prosperous group of countries considered, namely the ACC3, maternal employment may be shaped by economic realities to a greater extent than in the more prosperous EU15 countries, whereby mothers have to work for economic reasons. Accordingly, female employment rates by far surpass those found in southern Europe, despite the fact that the state provides little support for maternal employment when children are still young (Kovacheva et al, 2003; Stanculescu et al, 2003). Turkey is the exception in this instance, however, as only around a quarter of women of working age are in gainful employment. The latter country is characterised by the substantial exclusion of all women from the labour market, along with an exceptionally high fertility rate.

To summarise, while state support for the employment of mothers is strongly developed in the Nordic and in some eastern countries and France, a generally low level of support can be found in the residual/sub-protected regimes found in Anglo-Saxon and continental countries, as well as in southern Europe. Moreover, in many of the countries that provide little institutional support for maternal employment, the population's attitudes also tend to be unfavourable towards mothers taking up employment. As shown in Table 3, in Austria, west Germany, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland, more than 70% of the population (strongly) agree that a pre-school child suffers when his or her mother is working, while in Denmark, less than 20% of the population believe this to be true.

Institutional context of 'late phase'

In many European countries, early retirement has become more widespread in recent decades. This development can be largely attributed to the institutional establishment of pension systems and other benefit schemes, which have encouraged early exits from the labour market, at least since the beginning of the 1980s (OECD, 2005c). The effective average retirement age in OECD countries remains far below the statutory retirement age of 65 years in most countries (Table 4). Among the European countries, a poor employment rate among older workers (aged 55–64 years) can be observed in Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, France, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia, where employment rates average at around 40% or lower among this age group. In contrast, the employment rate of older workers in Sweden, Ireland, Portugal, Denmark and the UK reaches 60% or more. This is mainly due to differences in the extent to which the policy framework creates incentives for an early exit from the labour market. However, in some countries the low employment rate of older workers may be ascribed to the problem of unemployment, as is the case in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Poland.

Table 3 Structural context of parental labour market participation, by country (%)

	Proportion of young children in daycare facilities, by age of children 1998/99*		% of population with unfavourable views towards maternal employment 1999/2000**	Total fertility rate of women 2003***	Maternal employment rates by age of youngest child, 2002****		
	0–3 years old	3 years old- mandatory school age			<3 years old	3–5 years old	6–14 years old
EU25				1.48			
Nordic countries							
Denmark	64	91	18	1.76	71.4	77.5	79.1
Finland	22	66	41	1.76	32.2	74.7	85.3
Sweden	48	80	38	1.71	72.9	82.5	77.4
Continental countries							
Austria	4	68	74	1.38	80.1	70.3	69.8
Belgium	30	97	51	1.64	70.4	67.4	68.6
France	29	99	56	1.89	66.2	63.2	67.5
Germany (west)	2	60	73	1.34	56.0	58.1	64.3
Germany (east)	16	87	37				
Netherlands	6	98	46	1.75	74.2	68.2	70.1
Liberal countries							
Ireland	-	56	35	1.98	51.1	52.3	51.1
UK	-	60	46	1.71	57.2	56.9	67.0
Mediterranean countries							
Greece	3	46	78	1.28	47.9	50.9	53.5
Italy	6	95	81	1.28	54.4	51.7	49.4
Portugal	12	75	72	1.44	75.3	81.9	76.3
Spain	5	84	46	1.30	51.7	50.3	47.7
NMS							
Czech Republic	1	85	47	1.18	16.8	36.5	69.2
Estonia	19	85	65	1.37			
Hungary	11	86	63	1.27			
Latvia	13	52	75	1.29			
Lithuania	10	42	71	1.26			
Poland	5	48	77	1.22			
Slovakia	46	90	63	1.20			
Slovenia	29a	71a	47	1.20			
ACC3							
Bulgaria	10	65	61	1.23			
Romania	1	80	47	1.27			
Turkey	-	-	-	2.20			

*Source: OECD (2005b); for Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania: UNICEF 1999 (data for 1997); for west and east Germany: Engelbrech et al, 2001; for under three-year-olds, no comparable figures for Ireland and Slovenia (in the latter country, 29% of 1–2 year olds are covered). Slovenian data for 3+-year-olds from data by N. Stropnik (Slovenian expert).

**Source: European Values Survey 1999/2000 (own computation); agreement or strong agreement to the statement: 'A pre-school child suffers when his or her mother is working.'

***Source: Eurostat; estimated value for the EU25, the UK and Turkey, and provisional value for Ireland and Slovenia.

****Source: OECD (2005c).

Nordic regimes

In Denmark and Sweden, older workers remain in the labour market for longer compared with other European countries (Table 4); this is enabled, for example, by the existence of phased retirement options. However, in Finland, unemployment among older workers remains more of an issue.

Continental regimes

In continental Europe, the pressure to introduce pension reforms has been particularly acute in light of rising old age dependency ratios and pension costs. So far, such reforms have not resulted in the much-hoped-for changes in employment activity levels among people in this age group. With the exception of the Netherlands, the employment rates of workers aged 55–64 years in the continental countries are among the lowest in Europe.

Liberal regimes

Both Ireland and the UK exhibit comparatively high employment and low unemployment levels among their older workers. It is interesting to note that although the UK has faced less pressing old age dependency and pension cost problems, it was the first country to make the policy decision to raise the statutory pension age in order to induce the further privatisation of pensions (Ebbinghaus, 2003).

Mediterranean regimes

In southern Europe, a lower proportion of people aged 55–65 years remain in employment compared with the Anglo-Saxon or Nordic countries. Nonetheless, Greece, Portugal and Spain exhibit higher employment levels among their older workers compared with many of the continental European countries. With the notable exception of Portugal, very low employment rates can be found among older female workers. Interestingly, male workers in Portugal and Greece tend to remain in the labour market for longer than the mandatory retirement age prescribes (OECD, 2005c).

NMS regimes

In some of the NMS countries, such as Slovenia, Poland and Hungary, employment rates among older workers aged 55–64 years remain very low, amounting to less than 40% for men. Only in Poland can this finding be attributed to higher unemployment risks for this age group. In contrast, employment rates comparable to those found in southern Europe are observed among this age group in the Czech Republic and Estonia, reaching almost 60% for men.

ACC3 regimes

In the ACC3, employment rates among older workers tend to be relatively low. Less than half of men aged between 55 and 64 years are still in employment; in Bulgaria and Romania, this figure drops to less than a quarter of women in this age group.

Table 4 Employment levels and retirement age of older employees, by sex and country, 2003 (%)

	Employment rate (55–64 years old)*		Unemployment rate (55–64 years old)*		Average effective retirement age**	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
EU25	50.3	30.7				
Nordic countries						
Denmark	67.3	52.9	5.9	5.3	65.3	62.1
Finland	51.0	48.3	8.9	9.2	60.8	59.8
Sweden	70.8	66.3	5.2	6.0	63.5	62.0
Continental countries						
Austria	40.4	20.8	4.7	4.0	59.6	58.9
Belgium	37.8	18.7	8.4	7.6	58.5	56.8
Germany	48.2	31.6	10.1	8.2	60.9	60.2
France	40.9	32.9	10.5	8.6	59.3	59.4
Netherlands	56.7	31.8	3.9	3.5	61.0	59.1
Liberal countries						
Ireland	64.6	33.1	4.2	4.9	65.2	66.2
UK	64.8	46.3	4.3	5.5	63.1	61.2
Mediterranean countries						
Greece	58.7	25.5	15.0	6.2	62.4	60.9
Italy	42.8	18.5	11.3	6.5	61.2	60.5
Portugal	62.1	42.4	7.2	5.4	65.8	63.5
Spain	59.2	23.3	16.0	8.4	61.6	61.3
NMS						
Czech Republic	57.5	28.4	9.9	6.2	62.0	58.3
Estonia	58.9	47.3	9.9	10.5		
Hungary	37.8	21.8	5.5	6.0	57.8	56.0
Latvia	51.3	38.8	10.6	10.1		
Lithuania	55.3	36.7	13.1	12.3		
Poland	35.2	19.8	20.0	18.6	60.9	58.8
Slovak Republic	41.0	11.2	17.8	17.2	59.4	56.1
Slovenia	33.2	14.6	7.0	6.0		
ACC3						
Bulgaria	40.5	21.0	13.2	13.9	60.1a	57.5a
Romania	43.5	33.3	6.3	7.2	62.6a	62.9a
Turkey	45.4	22.1	10.1	10.7	62.5	61.9

*Source: Eurostat; the employment rate is calculated by dividing the number of persons aged 55 to 64 years in employment by the total population of the same age group; unemployment rates represent unemployed persons as a percentage of the labour force.

**Source: OECD (2005c); data for Bulgaria and Romania from Eurostat.

Differences between countries can be expected in relation to how patterns of time use change over the life course. The following hypotheses describe institutional differences along a number of lines in the different life stages.

Entrance phase

The number of paid working hours of young employees (i.e. childless people aged up to 35 years) is likely to be shaped by three main factors. Firstly, a lower number of paid working hours can be expected in countries where the educational phase tends to be long, for example in the Nordic countries. However, the effect of long periods of initial training on youth employment rates will be mediated by the particular characteristics of the education and training system. In countries where students tend to combine their initial training with employment (dual education and training system), youth employment rates are likely to be higher. Most importantly, however, youth unemployment may lead to a low number of paid working hours among the younger workers, as can be seen in Spain.

Rush hour of life

The main working phase tends to consist of a relatively short time span in the life course in which many employees raise their children. In countries where policies support the continuous employment of mothers (for example, the Nordic countries), the paid working hours of women should vary less over the life course than in countries which do not support the continuous employment of mothers (for example, west Germany), or where only mothers of older children are encouraged to re-enter the labour market (under the transitional model, where only the presence of small children reduces female employment, as seen, for example, in Hungary and the Czech Republic). In less prosperous countries, such as those in southern Europe and the former socialist countries, high levels of labour market participation can be expected among mothers, irrespective of whether maternal employment is actively encouraged through the provision of childcare facilities (Uunk, 2005). This is due to the fact that families in these countries tend to require two full-time wages to make ends meet. In contrast, the number of paid working hours of fathers is expected to be mainly shaped by working time regulations, wage levels and unemployment rates.

When couples enter the parenting phase, the amount of unpaid childcare work should theoretically increase. Moreover, the time spent on care of the elderly tends to increase in the core working stage, which is thus frequently called the 'rush hour of life'. However, women's time use can be expected to vary more widely over the family cycle than men's time use, as women still bear the bulk of responsibility for childcare and domestic work. Furthermore, in more gender-traditional societies, mothers are more likely to work a lower number of paid and a higher number of unpaid working hours than in more gender-equal societies, due to traditional views about out-of-home care, as well as a lack of public childcare provision. In more gender-equal societies, men are also expected to do a significant amount of unpaid work. Thus, a smaller gender gap in the amount of unpaid work performed can be expected in these societies.

Technological progress and increased capital intensity in home-produced goods and services have contributed to an increase in productivity in the home sector and to the reduced gender gap in unpaid work. However, it should be noted that in some of the less prosperous countries, such as Romania or Bulgaria, public or private care and household production services are barely affordable. Therefore, when analysing unpaid hours in the post-socialist countries, it should be taken into account that

there tends to be a considerable amount of subsistence production in these countries in order to compensate for a lack of employment and income (Wallace, 2002).

Late phase

In countries that discourage early retirement, or that encourage later retirement, a smaller drop in paid working hours can be expected among those aged 50 years and over (for example, in Sweden and Denmark) than in countries where an early exit from employment is quite common (for example, in Germany, the Netherlands and France). In the NMS and ACC3, people tend to retire somewhat earlier. Crucially, the amount of unpaid work performed by the older generation will depend on the importance of family networks. Older women in particular are expected to perform a substantial amount of unpaid work to support their children, especially in southern Europe; this is also likely to be the case in many of the post-socialist countries, where family networks are important for the economic well-being and security of families.

Time use preferences

The different life course stages can be expected to have a general impact on options for combining working life with other activities. For instance, it is more likely that respondents with care responsibilities will cite the time pressures of the rush hour of life in their choices. Moreover, in most countries, or at least in the EU15, a relatively high share of respondents can be expected to express a preference for a reduction of working hours (Bielenski et al, 2002). For example, many couples with young children (aged under six years of age) would like to work fewer hours (OECD, 2001, pp. 136ff).

However, people in social-democratic countries have more opportunities to use these options in practice, whereas in other countries there is a discrepancy between preferences and the take-up of such options. In the NMS, there is no tradition of part-time working, and working time reduction is mainly viewed as a way of eroding previously secure full-time employment. Thus, in less prosperous countries with lower income levels, people cannot afford to work shorter hours as both partners need to work full time in order to reach a reasonable standard of living (Hanjá, 2000; Hùlková, 2000; Zölky-Szita et al, 2000). Even in the more prosperous European countries, a reduction of working hours in the rush hour of life may be perceived as being precarious, particularly in the case of men. Research has shown that reduced working hours are often associated with penalties related to social protection, job security or career penalties (Bielensky et al, 2002; Hilderbrandt, 2006).

In terms of existing working time options and arrangements, it can be expected that individuals with caring responsibilities will perceive a greater need for, and make use of, care facilities, flexible work schedules and opportunities for paid leave. Moreover, it is more likely that the demand for reconciliation policies will be greater among those who are in the rush hour of life. Conversely, younger and older Europeans with no care responsibilities are expected to be more concerned with other dimensions of time use, such as having more free time, more money or retiring earlier.

Furthermore, it could be assumed that a growing convergence of preferences between men and women is emerging in the different countries. In fact, the preferences of men and women differ from each other to a much lesser extent than their actual situations do. The same is true from a cross-national perspective. As a result, the cultural ideals of people in Europe appear to be converging,

based on a standard that is shared between women and men and across the continent (Bielenski and Wagner, 2004).

Data and methods used in life course analyses

Studies that take a life course approach typically draw on longitudinal data, with event history analysis being one of the most popular methodological applications for the dynamic analysis of entry and exit processes in relation to transition patterns. However, while longitudinal data are required for some types of life course analyses, they are not necessarily required for the purposes of this study. Panel data, in particular cross-national comparative panel data (for example, the European Community Household Panel), typically do not involve as many waves for covering the entire life course span. As a result, even if the study could draw on such data for the analysis of time use, as done in previous studies (Anxo and Boulin, 2004), it would have to apply cross-sectional analyses. Thus, the methodological approach of using a ‘stylised life course typology’ for the analysis of time use constitutes one of the most up-to-date methods in cross-national comparative studies in this field of research.

Drawing on cross-sectional data, namely the Eurobarometer surveys on time use, the Eurobarometer 60.3 survey and the CCEB 2003 survey, an analysis of time use according to a stylised life course typology serves as a method for identifying cross-national differences in the patterns of time use over the life course; moreover, it can be used for assessing the influence of the societal context on the prevailing patterns of time use in different societies. The merits of the data used here lie in the cross-national comparability of information on actual and preferred time use. Individual preferences that may shape individual choices are typically left out in life course studies (Blossfeldt and Huinink, 2002, p. 24). In this analysis, the aim is to systematically compare patterns of time use over the life course across countries, drawing on the stylised life course typology and time use indicators described in detail in the following sections.

Life course typology

A stylised life course typology has been constructed here, which classifies households according to important life course phases. The classification used is a variant of the family cycle model developed by Glick (1947), and is in many ways similar to what was proposed by Apps and Reese (2005) or Anxo et al (2006). Using information on sex, age, partnership and cohabitation status, the number of children aged under 14 years in the household and the age of youngest child, a series of definitions have been formulated; these correspond to seven different stages in the life cycle (see box on p. 24). Moreover, the analysis considers two further stages, which fall outside a stylised life cycle typology but which are of increasing importance owing to changing family forms and fertility patterns – namely, both medium-aged childless singles and couples, who are defined as those aged between 36 and 50 years but who have no children under 14 years in the household. Owing to sample size restrictions, the analysis does not look at single parents.

Time use indicators

Using the Eurobarometer surveys (EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003), it is possible to examine three different time domains and to calculate the weekly hours that respondents spend on each of these domains, namely, paid work, unpaid work (including childcare, looking after one’s family and household tasks) and training (attending courses, studying or training). Information on the weekly number of paid and unpaid working hours is available for the respondent and his or her partner (see box on p. 24 for the questions used). The fact that information is available from the respondents on their own

and their partner's hours spent on paid and unpaid work hours can be used to increase the sample size in the following way. Hours spent by women on paid work are assessed by drawing on information from female respondents on their own working hours, as well as from male respondents on their female partners' working hours. The same is done for hours spent by women on unpaid work and for hours spent by men on paid and unpaid work.² However, in relation to information on time spent on training, no data was obtained on partners' hours and hence the sample sizes cannot be increased in the same way.

Stylised life course typology definitions

1. Young childless singles	Aged up to 35 years, not living with a partner, no children of their own aged under 14 years in the household
2. Young childless couples	Aged up to 35 years, living with a partner, no children of their own aged under 14 years in household
3. Couples with pre-school age children	Living with a partner, youngest child in household is aged below national school starting age
4. Couples with school age children	Living with a partner, youngest child in household is aged above national school starting age
5. Older couples without children	Aged between 51 and 65 years, living with a partner, no children aged under 14 years in household
6. Older singles without children	Aged between 51 and 65 years, not living with a partner, no children aged under 14 years in household
7. Elderly couples/singles	Aged above 65 years, living/not living with a partner, no children aged under 14 years in household

Source: Own formulations

Time use questions in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

1. On average, how many hours per week do you personally spend on paid work (including overtime and second jobs, but excluding travelling to and from work)? b) and your partner?
2. On average, how many hours per week do you personally spend on childcare, looking after your family, household members and on household tasks? b) and your partner?
3. On average, how many hours per week do you personally spend on attending courses, studying or training?

Source: EB 60.3; CCEB, 2003

² In this way, 9,671 responses were obtained on men's working hours and 10,926 responses on women's working hours in the EU15. By only drawing on respondents' reports of own working hours, the researchers would only have been able to retrieve 7,575 responses on men's and 8,293 responses on women's working hours. With respect to unpaid hours, 5,556 responses on men's unpaid hours and 5,334 responses on women's unpaid hours were obtained (instead of 3,703 and 3,102 responses, respectively). In the 13 post-socialist countries analysed, 6,527 responses on men's working hours and 8,381 responses on women's working hours were obtained (instead of 5,131 and 6,663 responses, respectively). This procedure was necessary to increase sample sizes. However, it should be noted that self-reporting concerning time use may differ from information indirectly obtained from partners.

Rather than focusing only on time use among the working population, this study aims to extend the analysis to the population as a whole. However, due to the fact that unpaid hours and training activities are only measured for those in employment, this is only possible for time use in terms of paid work. To measure time use in relation to paid work for the general population, the study calculates the average number of hours spent in paid work per person, allocating zero hours of paid work to those who are not working. In this way, a cross-national comparable measure of the average amount of time dedicated to paid work is devised, which can be used to examine the extent to which time use in the paid work domain changes across the life course in different societies. This inevitably complicates the picture, as low average hours spent on paid work may be the result of low average working hours and/or a high share of people not being in gainful employment for different reasons, such as education, full-time homemaking, maternity leave, unemployment and illness.

However, it is among the main aims of this report to provide a substantive interpretation of results based on the comparative analysis of national differences in employment and unemployment rates, part-time rates and usual working hours among full-time workers. In addition to the average number of hours worked per person of working age, the analysis also examines the average number of hours worked per employee, thus restricting the sample to those in gainful employment. A limitation of Eurobarometer data is that while it can be used to construct a measure of 'hours spent on paid work' for the entire population, allocating zero hours of paid work to those who are outside of the labour force, time spent on unpaid work or training is only measured among the working population. The analysis of unpaid work and training can thus only account for time use among those engaged in paid work, thereby excluding large parts of the population, such as non-working students, homemakers and unemployed or retired people.

Data used in time use preferences and indicators

The analysis of time use options and preferences focuses on the working population, as many of the questions in this context were only relevant for those in gainful employment. Using a set of questions from the Eurobarometer surveys (EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003) as indicators, the study was able to analyse preferences focusing on particular working time options, accounting systematically for the aforementioned life course typology (see text box on p. 24). The study used specific questions referring to the importance, availability, use of and satisfaction with different options for combining work with other activities, looking at potential differences between importance, availability and use (see Annex 2 for Eurobarometer questions used). It also looked in greater detail at different options that individuals find important in different stages of their lives for combining their paid work with other activities. Moreover, the study accounted for other issues, including the importance of paid work in a person's life, preferences for working time reductions and attitudes towards paid work or part-time jobs. Perspectives relating to age of retirement, both desired and expected, along with certain kinds of 'trade-offs' were also analysed through questions assessing the respondents' interest in postponing retirement by two or three years, given certain conditions. Satisfaction with several life domains – such as paid work, unpaid work, division of household tasks, health and finances – were also analysed. Finally, a set of questions was also posed to respondents in relation to taking time off work to meet caring responsibilities, study or training, early retirement and personal time, among other things, as well as with regard to who they think should pay for such leave.

Data limitations

Due to sample size restrictions, the described life course typology had to be adapted for some of the analyses. Completely excluded from the analysis are those aged over 65 years, due to a serious bias in the sample composition.³ Also excluded from the core analysis of time use over the life course are childless respondents aged between 36 and 50 years, as this category does not fit into a stylised life course. Nevertheless, in a separate analysis, the study looks at whether time use in these categories differs from that of the younger or older childless respondents. Finally, also excluded from the analysis by country are Northern Ireland, Luxembourg, Cyprus and Malta, where fewer interviews were carried out than in other countries. The total sample size over the six categories of the stylised life course typology used in the time use analysis – that is, young childless singles and couples, couples with pre-school or school age children, and older couples or singles without children – amounts to 16,456 respondents for the 25 countries under consideration in this report. Moreover, the study can draw on a sample of 2,152 childless couples aged between 36 and 50 years to compare their situation with their counterparts with children. Sample sizes in the Eurobarometer surveys are quite small for performing analyses by country. For this reason, life course categories were combined when necessary. Young childless singles and couples were combined to form a category of young childless respondents. Similarly, older childless singles and couples were combined to form a group of older childless respondents (aged 36–50 years).

In the analysis of preferred time use options, the study looks at four life course stages. Firstly, it looks at ‘childless respondents aged up to 35 years’ (singles and couples grouped together). Secondly, it looks at respondents with ‘pre-school or school children’. This category includes single parents and individuals living in couples with pre-school or school children. The third category consists of childless respondents aged 36 to 50 years and includes individuals who are either single or cohabiting with their partner. Fourthly, it looks at childless respondents aged over 50 years (singles and couples grouped together). The total sample size amounts to 11,947 workers; however, as regards the life course, it is only considered to be a sample size of 11,885 respondents, since there were insufficient data to include the remaining workers in the analysis by life course. For case numbers and the distribution of workers across life course states, see Table A2 in the Annex.

³ Labour force participation rates, as reported by Eurostat and other official sources, strongly differ from the distribution of the sample of those aged over 65 years according to labour force status. Furthermore, it should be noted that although the defined groups are highly suitable for analysing life course transitions focusing on the family context, in terms of employment behaviour the groups of older couples and singles may not be ideal for assessing the impact of retirement schemes.

Analysis of time use over the life course

In its analysis of time use over the life course, this study focuses on common stages in the life cycle. Typically, people start off as young singles, then enter the family formation stage (partnership formation/parenthood) and finally reach the empty nest and pre-retirement phase. As there are vast gender differences in terms of time use, the study looks at women and men separately. It begins with an analysis of the number of weekly paid working hours of women and men. In this context, it is important to take into account the fact that female participation rates vary between countries. The study therefore includes the whole population in the analysis, assigning zero hours of paid work to those who are not engaged in paid work. Focusing on the 'rush hour of life', the study then looks at the amount of unpaid work and the total workload (sum of paid and unpaid work) of working parents. Finally, it examines the amount of time spent in education/training among those in employment.

Paid working hours of women

Due to significant national differences in the structural context (for example, the educational system, family policy and retirement regime) and cultural context ('cultures of motherhood'), cross-national variations can be found in women's participation in paid work in terms of working hours and particularly with regard to their life course behaviour. The results in Table 5 show the average number of paid weekly working hours of women in different life stage categories.

In relation to young childless women aged up to 35 years, the average weekly working hours performed by women in this category are as low as fewer than 20 hours a week in some countries. In other countries, this average amounts to just below 30 hours a week. Such country differences in the young childless stage can, on the one hand, be explained by national variations in the educational system, given that a large proportion of people in this category consist of students. However, problems faced by labour market entrants in accessing employment also have to be taken into account. In other countries, young women engage in a comparatively longer average number of hours of paid work, for example in continental and liberal regimes, particularly in Austria, Germany and the UK; this is mainly attributed to high employment rates, stemming from a low proportion of full-time students and a low youth unemployment risk. In these countries, a substantial proportion of students may also combine their studies with paid work (Couppié et al, 2001).

In contrast, the comparatively shorter average number of hours of paid work performed by young childless women – for example, in the Nordic and in many post-socialist countries – is largely ascribed to the long duration of initial education and/or a high unemployment risk for labour market entrants. Lack of employment opportunities is the most powerful explanation for the low involvement in paid work among young women in Poland, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Lithuania, where youth unemployment is at a very high level. In many other countries, where women work a comparatively shorter number of average hours of paid work – for instance, in France and Greece – youth unemployment is also quite high. Denmark, however, does not fit into this explanatory framework. Despite the country's high employment rates, women seem to work a shorter average number of paid working hours, largely due to the fact that many students combine their studies with part-time work.

Therefore, while the low work involvement of young childless women in some countries is best explained by the problem of youth unemployment, in others it can be attributed to the long duration of initial education. Furthermore, patterns of youth activity cut across the classical regime types. In

continental Europe, France stands out as the country with the lowest level of paid work involvement among young childless women, while in southern Europe, it is Greece. This is a plausible finding for both countries because of their high levels of youth unemployment. Finally, among the post-socialist countries, where youth employment rates tend to be low, Latvia stands out as having an exceptionally long average number of hours being worked by young childless women, despite a high unemployment rate among those aged under 25 years. However, a steep rise in employment and longer working hours are observed among young people in Latvia after they reach the age of 25 years.

Table 5 Average weekly working hours of women engaged in paid work, by life course and country

	Young childless (up to age 35 years old)	Couple with pre-school age child	Couple with school age child	Older childless (aged 51–65 years old)
Nordic countries	18	24	32	21
Denmark	15	29	32	(-)
Finland	20	19	31	23
Sweden	20	26	33	27
Continental countries	23	16	21	15
Austria	28	12	24	13
Belgium	22	23	23	16
France	19	22	26	(-)
Germany (east)	27	12	24	12
Germany (west)	24	9	15	15
Netherlands	21	14	16	14
Liberal countries	22	12	18	13
Ireland	21	12	13	9
UK	24	13	21	16
Mediterranean countries	21	19	22	13
Greece	18	15	18	12
Italy	22	16	22	16
Portugal	20	28	30	12
Spain	23	17	20	11
NMS	20	20	32	17
Czech Republic	20	17	36	(-)
Estonia	22	19	32	22
Hungary	23	15	26	17
Latvia	29	27	38	19
Lithuania	17	22	31	19
Poland	15	16	22	10
Slovakia	15	14	34	15
Slovenia	19	32	37	15
ACC3	18	11	16	9
Bulgaria	19	16	30	14
Romania	24	15	23	8
Turkey	13	7	6	3

Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages (inactive women coded as working 0 hours); (-) no reliable data available due to low sample sizes.

In relation to those in the child-rearing phase, extensive country differences can be observed. Irrespective of the age of their youngest child, mothers in Turkey, west Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands generally tend to work very few hours in paid employment. In contrast, mothers in Sweden, Denmark, Latvia, Slovenia and Portugal tend to work relatively long hours in paid employment. In a number of countries, such as Slovakia, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, mothers of pre-school age children tend to work relatively few hours, while mothers of school age children work as many average hours as their counterparts in Sweden, for instance. Thus, it appears that the traditional regime types add little to the explanation of maternal employment patterns.

Not even the Nordic countries show a homogenous pattern: Sweden and Denmark exhibit a continuous female employment pattern in which mothers generally perform a level of paid work that is significantly above the EU average, while Finland shows a transitional pattern of labour market withdrawal among mothers with children under the age of three years (see Table 5). Another example is Portugal, which differs significantly from the 'exit or full-time model' found in all the other Mediterranean countries. Due to the fact that maternal employment patterns cannot be generalised across regime types, patterns of maternal paid work involvement have been established by way of empirical cluster analysis that seeks to identify subgroups of countries with minimum intra-group variation, but with maximum inter-group variation. This analysis is based on country averages in terms of hours of paid work completed by: a) mothers of children younger than the mandatory school age; b) mothers of older children who already attend school. The study identified seven country clusters, or 'life course models of female labour market involvement', which are described in detail here.

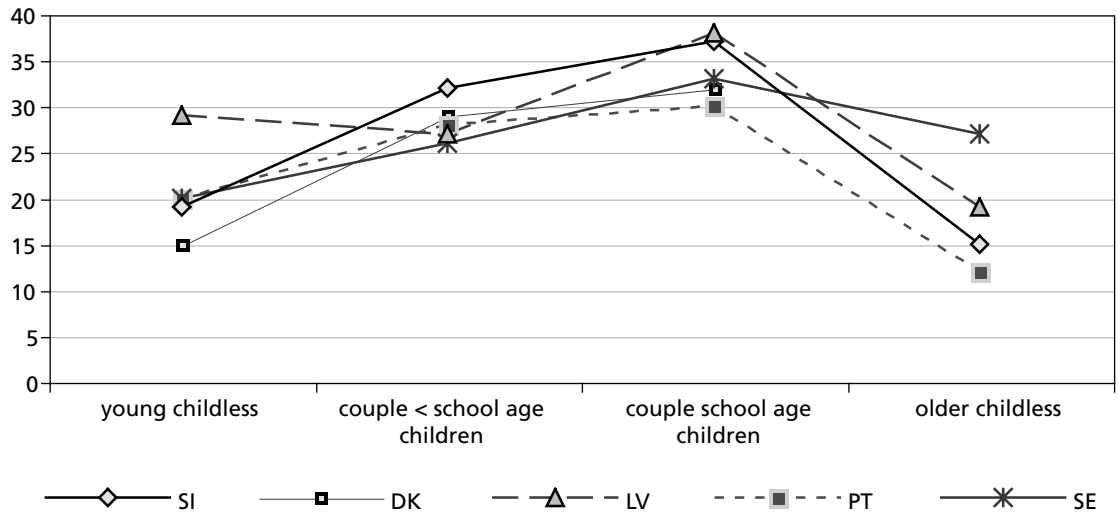
First, there is the 'continuous model' of women's paid work involvement (Figure 1a). In the countries that fall into this category – namely, Denmark, Slovenia, Sweden, Latvia and Portugal – a high and continuous participation over the life course involving long part-time or full-time hours can be found. In Denmark and Sweden, high employment rates are observed among mothers, a significant proportion of whom, nonetheless, work long part-time hours. In contrast, in Portugal, Slovenia and Latvia, employed mothers generally tend to work full time.

France and Belgium also show a continuous model of women's paid work involvement (Figure 1b). However, they fall into a separate country cluster because maternal labour market involvement is, albeit continuous, on a somewhat lower level. This is because while the majority of employed mothers work full time, among lower-qualified women motherhood is still associated with a withdrawal from the labour market (Fagnani, 1999). Hence, a 'continuous model with an exit or full-time component' can be observed in these two countries.

The countries that exhibit a continuous pattern of high female work involvement do not form a homogenous group either in terms of state support for maternal employment, or in terms of people's attitudes towards maternal involvement in paid work. While childcare facilities are extensive in Sweden, Slovenia and Denmark, this is much less the case in Portugal and Latvia, where mothers often work out of financial necessity, even in the absence of a formal childcare infrastructure. In France and Belgium, there is evidence of a relatively good childcare infrastructure; however, provisions are less extensive than in the Nordic countries. In some of the countries that exhibit a continuous pattern of work involvement by women, a high proportion of the population has favourable views towards the employment of mothers of pre-school age children, for example in

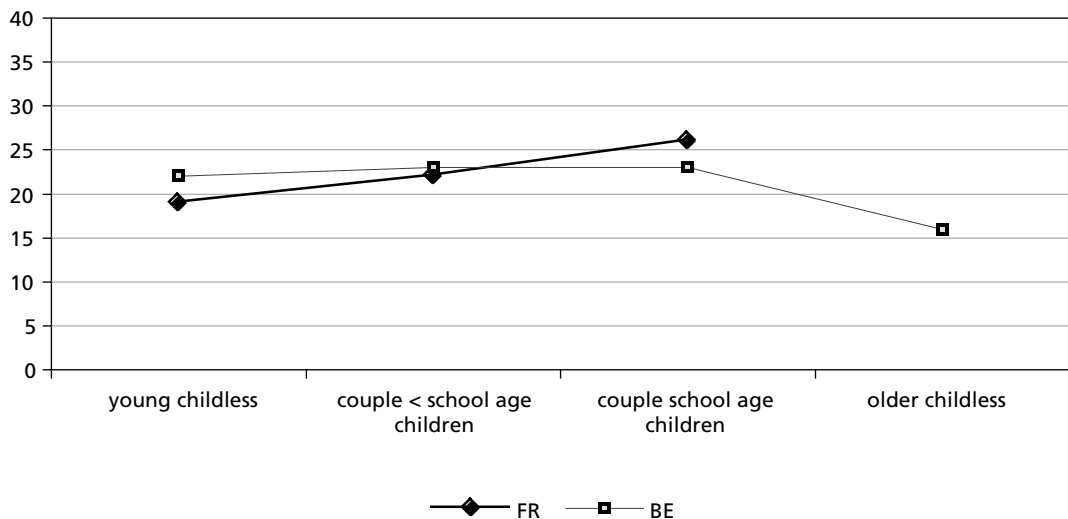
Sweden and Denmark, as well as in Slovenia, France and Belgium (see Table 3). Conversely, in some of the other countries – such as Latvia and Portugal – an exceptionally high proportion of people hold unfavourable views about maternal employment.

Figure 1a Continuous model of female labour market participation, by life course and country (%)



Note: Left = high continuous; right = moderate continuous with full-time or exit pattern. Weighted averages shown.
Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003.

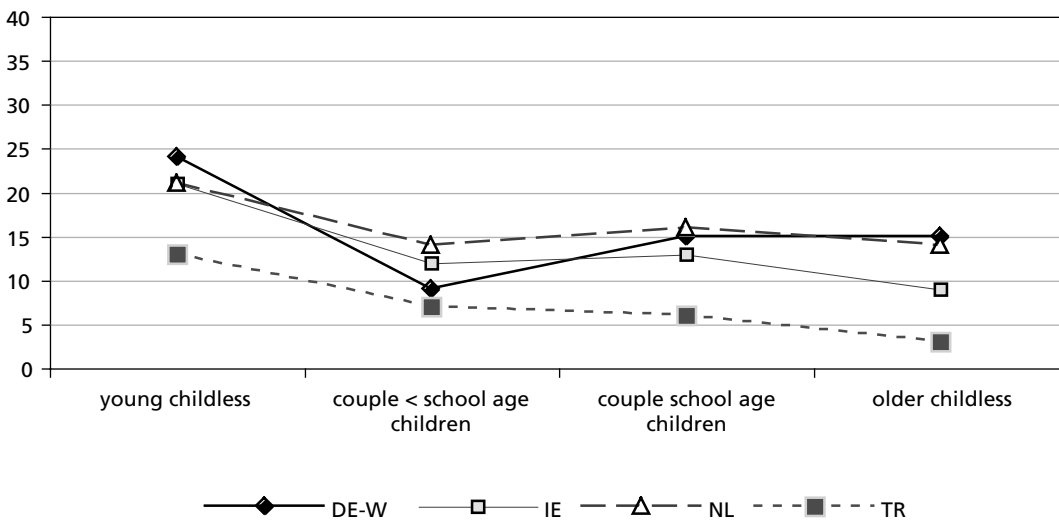
Figure 1b Moderately continuous model of female labour market participation, by life course and country (%)



Note: Left = high continuous; right = moderate continuous with full-time or exit pattern. Weighted averages shown.
Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003.

The second type of model – the ‘traditional model’ of women’s involvement in paid work – can be found in west Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands (Figure 2a). In these countries, women severely reduce their working hours once they have children and tend not to increase their hours when their children start going to school. Typically, mothers in this group of countries either opt out of paid work altogether or work shorter part-time hours, even when children are at school. The most ‘traditional’ pattern is found in Turkey, where an exceptionally low average number of paid hours is worked by women (note: Turkey forms a separate cluster but for reasons of space is plotted in the same figure as the countries exhibiting a traditional model of ‘exit or part-time’).

Figure 2a Traditional model of female labour market participation, by life course and country (%)

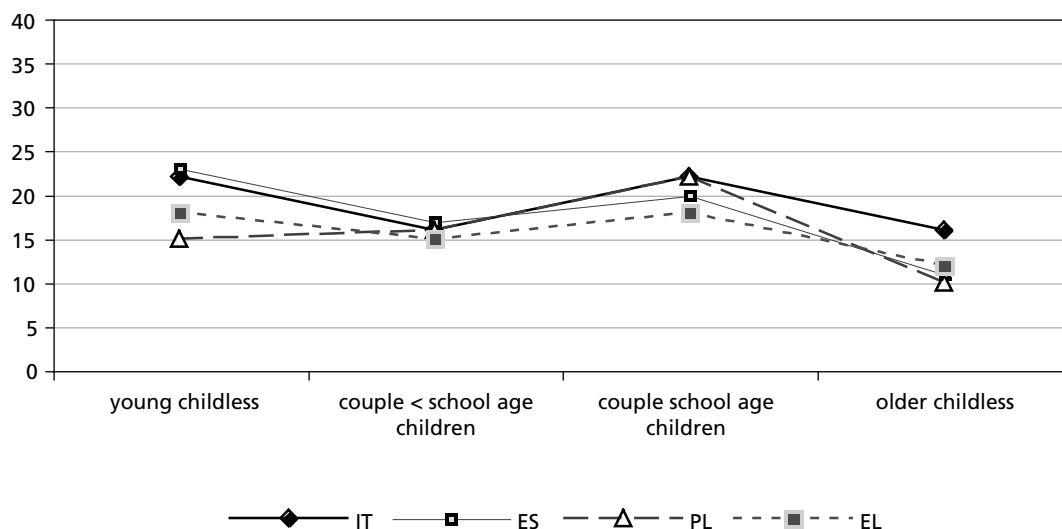


Note: Left = low traditional with exit or part-time pattern; right = moderate traditional with full-time or exit pattern. Weighted averages shown.

Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003.

Countries that exhibit a moderately traditional model of maternal paid work involvement are Italy, Spain, Greece and Poland (Figure 2b). In these countries, a very low female employment rate is observed. However, employed mothers typically work long full-time hours. Overall, therefore, three different variants of the ‘traditional model’ can be observed: the ‘exit model’ found in Turkey, where most mothers are out of the labour force; the ‘exit or part-time’ model found in west Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands; and the ‘exit or full-time model’ model found in Italy, Spain, Greece and Poland. Again, no straightforward relationship can be found between a traditional model of maternal employment and beliefs regarding the impact of maternal employment on the well-being of pre-school children: relatively unfavourable views exist in west Germany, Greece, Italy and Poland, while rather favourable views can be found in Spain, the Netherlands and Ireland (see Table 3). One common pattern among all of these countries, however, is a lack of childcare facilities.

Figure 2b Moderately traditional model of female labour market participation, by life course and country (%)



Note: Left = low traditional with exit or part-time pattern; right = moderate traditional with full-time or exit pattern. Weighted averages shown.

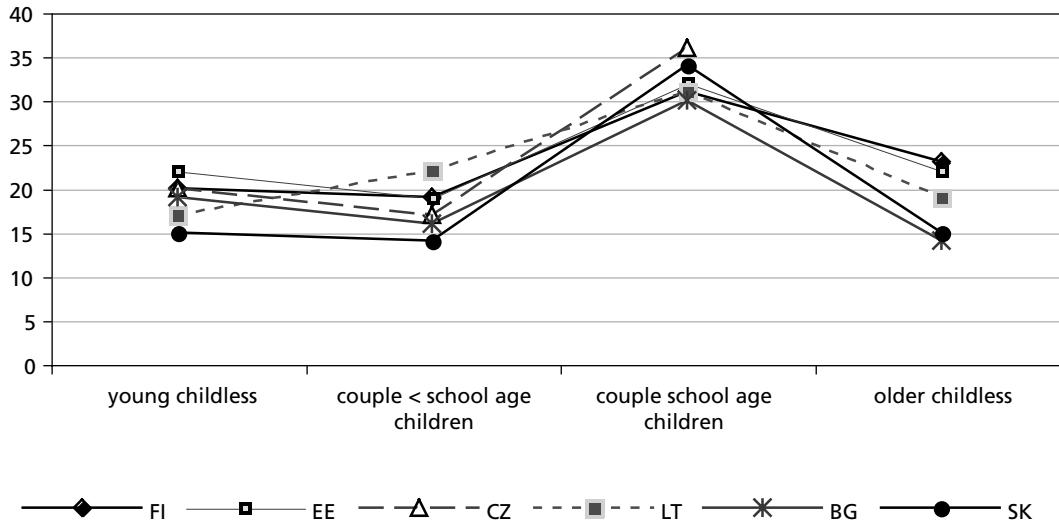
Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003.

Finally, it is possible to distinguish a group of countries that exhibit a ‘transitional’ model of women’s involvement in paid work. In this context, women severely reduce their working hours once they have pre-school age children, but then significantly increase their work involvement again when children start going to school. Two variants of the transitional model can be distinguished. In Finland, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia, women work considerably reduced hours as long as their children are of pre-school age, but substantially increase their paid work involvement when their children start going to school – to a level that is comparable to that found in Sweden (Figure 3a). Hence, a ‘transitional model of high maternal paid work involvement’ can be observed in these countries.

In contrast, in Austria, the UK, east Germany, Hungary and Romania, women reduce their level of paid work involvement once they have children to levels as low as those observed in the Netherlands, west Germany or Ireland; however, when their children reach school-going age, women tend to increase their hours to levels similar to those found in France or Belgium (Figure 3b). Thus, a ‘transitional model of moderate maternal paid work involvement’ can be found in these countries.

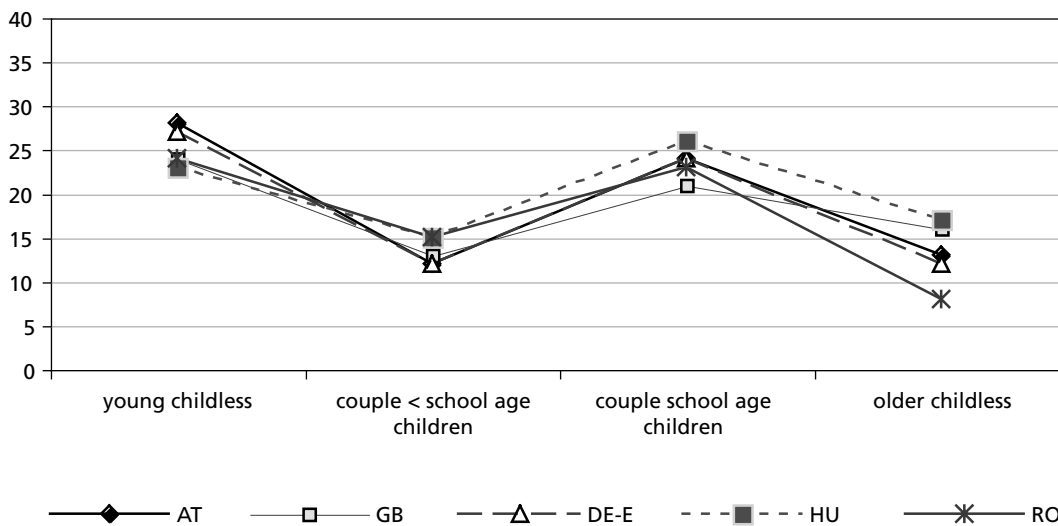
As the sample sizes in the Eurobarometer surveys are too low to allow for a distinction between young childless singles and couples on a country basis, this study had to combine these two groups for the analysis displayed in Figures 1–3. This somewhat distorts the picture of women’s paid work involvement over the life course, since paid work involvement in the pre-parental phase tends to be significantly lower among singles than among couples, who are less likely to remain in education. For this reason, the countries were pooled according to the six clusters identified in terms of maternal employment in order to estimate the average number of paid working hours of childless singles on the one hand and couples on the other.

Figure 3a Transitional model of female labour market participation, by life course and country (%)



Note: Left = transitional with strong involvement; right = transitional with moderate involvement. Weighted averages shown.
Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003.

Figure 3b Moderately transitional model of female labour market participation, by life course and country (%)

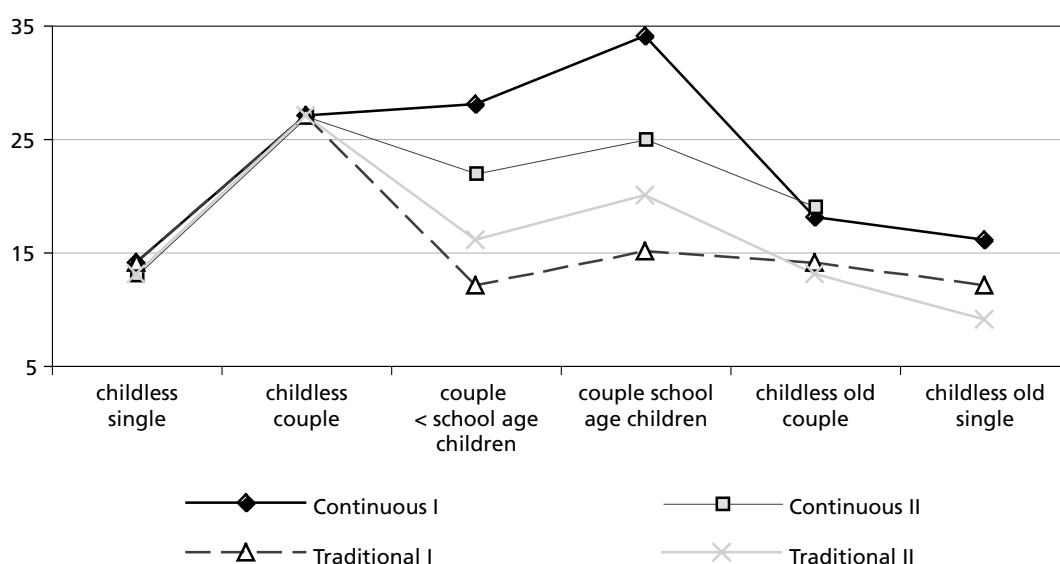


Note: Left = transitional with strong involvement; right = transitional with moderate involvement. Weighted averages shown.
Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003.

As can be seen from Figures 4a and 4b, which provide a summary outline of the ‘life course models of female labour market involvement’ identified, the average number of paid hours completed by childless women aged up to 35 years amounts to around 14 hours among single women and to around 27 hours among women in couples in five out of the six models or clusters. This may suggest

that some of the country differences in the involvement in paid work of young women, young childless singles and couples, taken together (shown in Figures 1–3), are masked. On the other hand, it can be plausibly argued that country differences in the average number of hours worked by the young generation are driven by different patterns of leaving home. This aligns with previous research, according to which, in high youth unemployment countries, young people tend to live with their parents for a long time and to postpone setting up their own household and first stable partnership formation. This, in turn, would lead to a longer average number of paid working hours in Austria, Germany and the UK, where people leave full-time education and parental homes relatively early and, in contrast, to shorter average hours in many post-socialist and southern European countries, where a lack of employment opportunities for young people leads to a postponement of own household formation.

Figure 4a Continuous/traditional life course models of female labour market participation, by life course and country (%)



Notes: Continuous I: Sweden, Denmark, Slovenia, Latvia and Portugal (high continuous).

Continuous II: France and Belgium (moderate continuous with full-time or exit pattern).

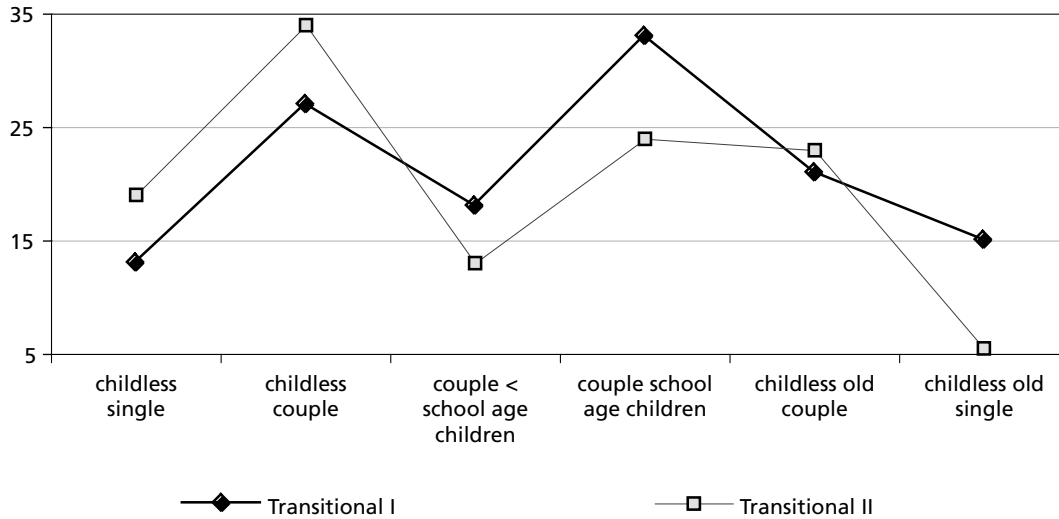
Traditional I: West Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands (excluding Turkey) (low traditional with exit or part-time pattern).

Traditional II: Italy, Spain, Poland and Greece (moderate traditional with full-time or exit pattern).

Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

Only the Nordic countries do not fit this pattern. In these countries, a pattern of a shorter average number of working hours among young people is found, despite the fact that they can afford and tend to leave the parental home rather early. However, in these countries, cohabitation with partners is already common among students, so does not necessarily coincide with full-time entry into the labour market, as is the case in southern Europe. In any event, the main purpose of estimating the average level of paid work involvement among young childless couples was to provide a picture of female life courses that is more detailed and that takes account of partnership and own household formation as an important part of the transition towards adulthood. As Figures 4a and 4b illustrate, in the traditional and transitional models of female work involvement, the amount of paid working hours strongly declines with motherhood, more steeply than is suggested in Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 4b Transitional life course model of female labour market participation, by life course and country (%)



Transitional I: Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria (transitional with strong involvement).

Transitional II: Austria, the UK, east Germany, Hungary and Romania (transitional with moderate involvement).

Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

Figure 4a suggests that in the type I continuous pattern of high female employment (for example, in Sweden), hours remain stable or even increase when children are born, while in the type II continuous pattern of moderate female employment (for example, in France), hours appear to decrease at motherhood. This drop in average paid hours once women have children is most marked in traditional and transitional patterns of female work involvement. Indeed, the data suggest that it is most strongly pronounced in Austria, the UK, east Germany, Hungary and Romania – that is, in the countries that form the transitional model of moderate female labour market involvement, due to the fact that in the childless stage, the longest hours are worked as a result of an early exit from full-time education.

The final part of this analysis looks at the paid work involvement of women in the ‘empty nest and pre-retirement phase’ (childless women aged 50–65 years). In this context, older women in the Nordic countries, as well as the Baltic states, tend to be more strongly involved in paid work compared with most of the other countries. A long average number of hours aligns with the high employment rates of women aged 55–64 years in Sweden (66%), Denmark (53%), Finland (48%) and Estonia (47%) compared with most other European countries (see Table 4). As older women in the Nordic countries and Baltic states are most likely to be in employment after the age of 50 years, the average paid work involvement of older women in these countries also tends to be higher in the continuous and transitional models of high female paid work involvement than in traditional and transitional models of moderate female work involvement. However, one has to be cautious about making generalisations across country clusters based on measures of maternal paid work involvement, as a high internal variability can be found in terms of the work involvement of older women: for example, older women are largely excluded from the labour market in Slovenia, which belongs to the model of continuously high female paid work involvement (see Table 3).

Paid working hours of men

Table 6 displays the average number of weekly working hours of men in paid employment. As the results show, the time spent on paid work over the life course among men follows a similar pattern in all of the countries under consideration. None of the countries show a drop in working hours among fathers, as is the case for women in the more gender-traditional societies. On the contrary, fathers tend to work longer paid hours than their young childless counterparts. The longest paid working hours among fathers are observed in southern Europe, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey. In some of these countries, for example, Austria, unemployment tends to be low; however, in other countries, such as Slovakia, there is a severe lack of employment. The reason why a long average number of hours of paid work is observed in some countries with high unemployment levels is attributed to the fact that employed people in these countries tend to work rather long hours.

In contrast, the shortest average number of hours is worked by fathers in the Nordic countries, France and the Netherlands. This aligns with the fact that working hours in these countries are strongly regulated and that the standard working week has a comparatively low number of working hours. Moreover, in Finland and France, moderately high levels of male unemployment are observed in the 25–54 years age group. In Bulgaria, due to high unemployment levels, the average paid work involvement of fathers is at a similarly low level to the levels found in the Nordic countries. To summarise, therefore, fathers tend to work a comparatively shorter average number of hours in the Nordic and in some of the continental European countries (with the exception of Austria), while they tend to work a comparatively long number of hours in southern and eastern Europe (with the exception of Bulgaria as a result of high unemployment levels).

Looking at the average number of hours worked by young childless men (aged up to 35 years) in western Europe, a relatively short average number of hours is observed in the Nordic countries, southern Europe (except Greece) and France, while a comparatively long average number of hours is evident in the liberal regimes and in continental Europe (except France). The comparatively lower paid work involvement of young childless men can either be attributed to a high proportion of non-working or part-time working students, for example in the Nordic countries, or a high unemployment risk for young people, for example in France and Spain as well as Finland. A more mixed picture is evident in the post-socialist countries, where a rather high paid work involvement of young men is observed in Turkey, Hungary, Latvia and the Czech Republic, in contrast to a relatively low level of involvement in Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Bulgaria. In Poland and Bulgaria, the high levels of youth unemployment are the most powerful explanation for this low level of paid work involvement among young childless men. Youth unemployment is also quite high in Lithuania and Slovenia. However, in Latvia and the Czech Republic, a long average number of hours is evident, despite the high youth unemployment rates among those aged under 25 years; this is attributed to a steep rise in employment with increasing age, along with the fact that employed people tend to work a longer average number of hours.

In relation to the category of older childless men (aged 51–65 years), extensive country differences emerge: the lowest paid work involvement among older childless men is observed in continental Europe (except the Netherlands), in the ACC3 and in most of the NMS countries; in contrast, a comparatively high work involvement of older men emerges in some of the Nordic, Anglo-Saxon and southern European countries. Therefore, while the Nordic countries (to a lesser extent in Finland)

as well as the liberal and Mediterranean countries (except Italy) exhibit a model of 'late exit' from the labour market, the opposite is true in continental Europe (except the Netherlands) and in the ACC3. In the NMS, a more mixed picture emerges, with the Czech Republic and Estonia exhibiting a model of postponed exit from the labour market, while in most of the other countries, male employment rates appear to drop considerably after the age of 50 years. Thus, exit patterns clearly vary within the different welfare regimes due to specific national policies and labour market contexts.

Table 6 Average weekly working hours of men engaged in paid work, by life course and country

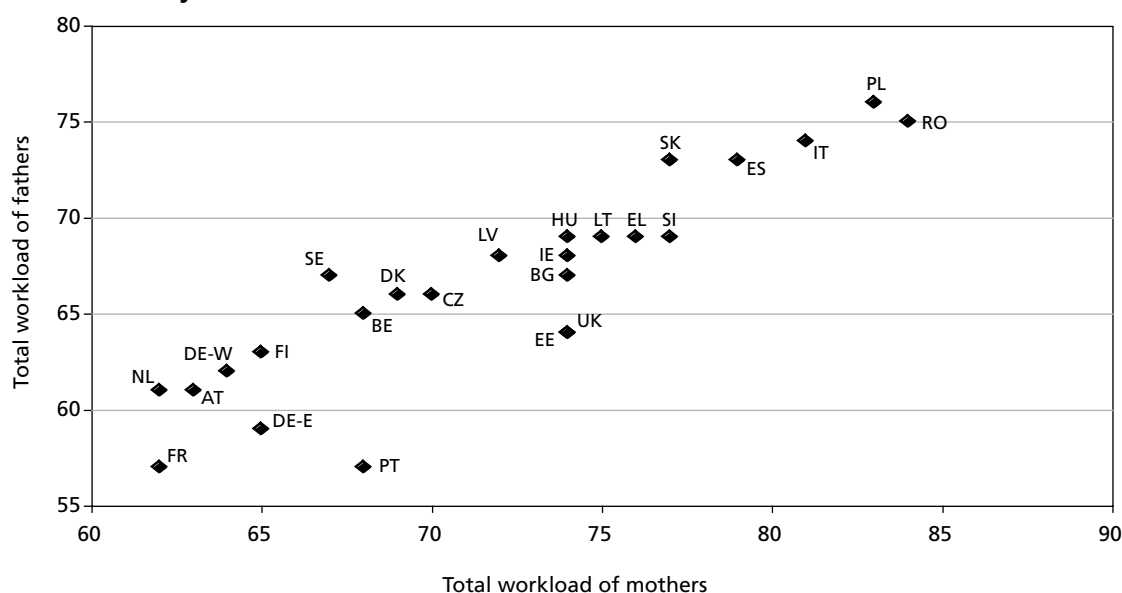
	Young childless (up to age 35 years)	Couple with pre-school age child	Couple with school age child	Older childless (aged 51–65 years)
Nordic countries	23	39	40	23
Denmark	26	38	36	(-)
Finland	20	39	(-)	19
Sweden	23	39	42	27
Continental countries	29	40	40	21
Austria	32	(-)	46	20
Belgium	30	44	37	21
France	25	39	41	(-)
Germany (east)	27	(-)	(-)	17
Germany (west)	29	40	41	21
Netherlands	30	39	39	26
Liberal countries	30	(-)	(-)	23
Ireland	30	41	(-)	26
UK	29	(-)	(-)	(-)
Mediterranean countries	27	45	46	23
Greece	33	48	52	23
Italy	(-)	45	47	(-)
Portugal	23	43	42	(-)
Spain	25	45	(-)	27
NMS	25	44	43	23
Czech Republic	29	(-)	48	33
Estonia	24	41	43	24
Hungary	32	47	49	18
Latvia	29	45	46	20
Lithuania	16	44	(-)	21
Poland	21	43	43	20
Slovakia	25	42	47	(-)
Slovenia	21	43	42	20
ACC3	27	38	41	20
Bulgaria	22	36	39	22
Romania	26	40	(-)	17
Turkey	31	(-)	46	20

Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages (inactive men coded as working 0 hours); (-) no reliable data available due to low sample sizes.

Unpaid working hours and total workload of working parents

The Eurobarometer surveys also provide data on time use in relation to unpaid hours of work. Unfortunately, only employed people, and not those outside of the labour force, were asked about the weekly number of hours spent on housework or unpaid care work (for example, looking after children or other relatives in need of care). As the sample was restricted to the working population only, the following analyses focus on the paid, unpaid and total workloads of those in employment. Moreover, because of restrictions in the sample size for most of the life course stages defined, the study is confined to working parents in couple households. This becomes necessary when analyses by country are to be performed. A possible way of circumventing such restrictions would be to pool countries according to the broad categorisation of regime types. However, it was decided to stay at the country level because, as will be shown in the example of working parents, the pooling of countries can mask important country variations within regime types and, in effect, can lead to strongly biased results.

Figure 5 Average total workload of employed mothers and fathers, by number of hours and country

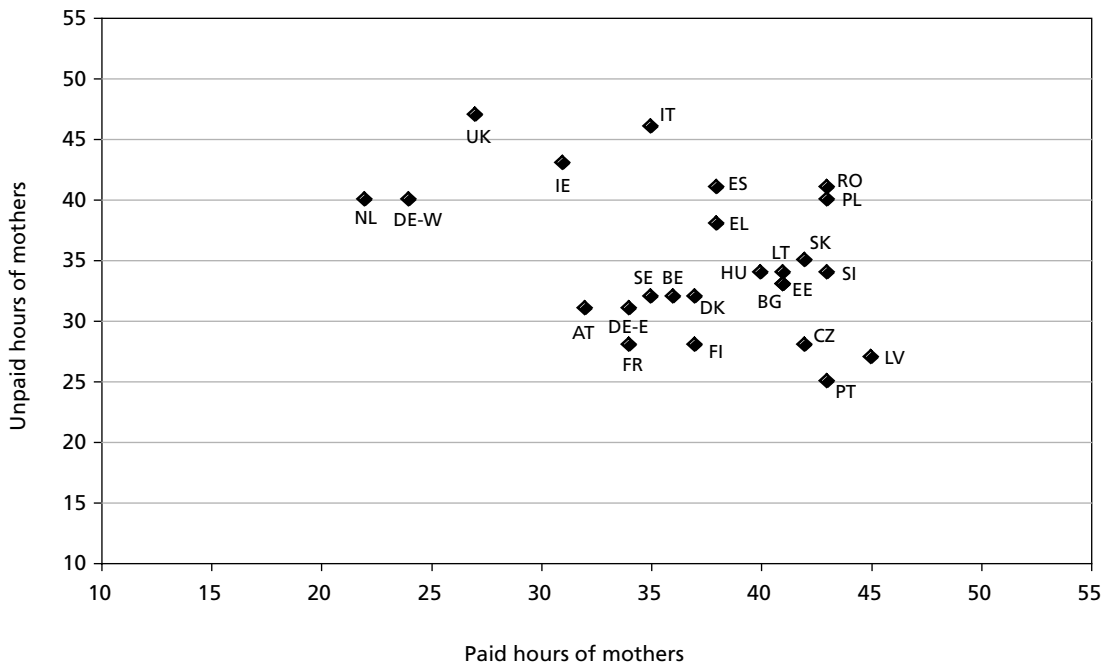


Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

As a first step, this part of the study plots the country averages of the total workload of working mothers against the total workload of working fathers. As shown in Figure 5, at country level, the total workload of working mothers increases in almost linear fashion with the total workload of working fathers. In Poland, Romania, Italy and Spain, working mothers and fathers tend to have a very high total workload, at 80 hours a week or more and around 75 hours a week, respectively. In contrast, in France, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Finland and the Netherlands, the total workload of working parents tends to be somewhat lower, nonetheless amounting to between 55 and 65 hours a week. Thus, caution has to be taken when making generalisations across regime types. Overall, it can be said that working parents tend to have the highest total workload in many of the post-socialist countries and in southern Europe, while in continental Europe the total workload of working parents tends to be significantly lower. An important exception in this context is Portugal, which once again does not fit the pattern of other southern European countries. Also, among the post-socialist countries, the Czech Republic demonstrates an atypically low total workload among working parents.

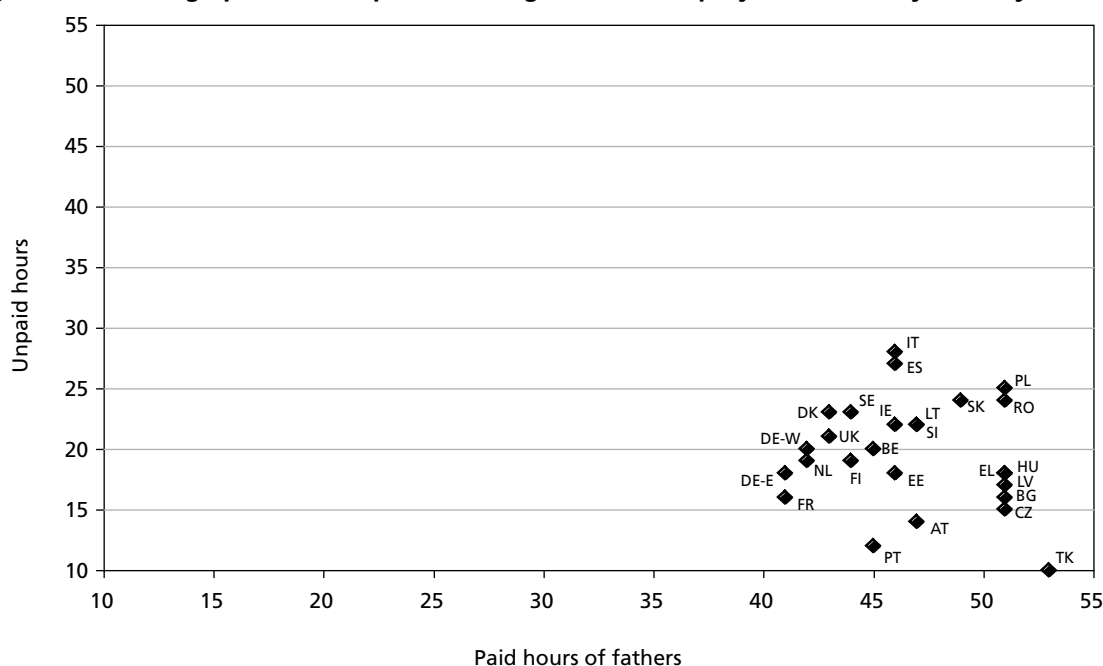
In relation to the number of unpaid working hours, as the results in Figure 6a show, mothers work a particularly high number of unpaid working hours in the liberal countries, as well as in Italy, Spain, Romania, the Netherlands, west Germany and Poland (40 hours or more a week). There is no linear relationship between the number of paid hours completed by mothers and the number of additional unpaid hours they work. In some countries – for example, the UK, west Germany and the Netherlands – a low number of paid hours tends to be combined with a high unpaid workload. In other countries – such as Portugal, Finland, Latvia and the Czech Republic – a high paid work involvement among mothers tends to be combined with a comparatively low level of unpaid work. In a third group of countries – including Romania, Poland, Spain, Greece, Italy, Slovakia and Slovenia – long hours of paid work are combined with long hours of unpaid work, amounting to a high total workload.

Figure 6a Average paid and unpaid working hours of employed mothers, by country



Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

In relation to working fathers, an exceptionally low amount of unpaid work appears to be performed in Turkey, Portugal, Austria, the Czech Republic and Bulgaria; in contrast, a significant level of unpaid work seems to be conducted by working fathers in Italy and Spain (Figure 6b). As with their female counterparts, no linear relationship emerges between the number of paid hours completed by fathers and the additional unpaid hours they work. In countries with moderate levels of total workloads among fathers, a further distinction can be made between countries such as Denmark and Sweden, where a comparatively shorter number of hours of paid work are combined with a high unpaid workload, and countries such as Turkey and the Czech Republic, where the reverse is true. In Poland and Romania, both the paid and the unpaid workloads of fathers are comparatively high (high total workload), while in France, few paid hours tend to be combined with few unpaid hours (low total workload) among working fathers.

Figure 6b Average paid and unpaid working hours of employed fathers, by country


Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

As shown in Figures 6a and 6b, working mothers and fathers differ from each other in that working mothers in many countries tend to work far more unpaid hours, while working fathers tend to complete more hours of paid work (see also Table A1 in Annex). However, substantial country differences can also be found with respect to the gender gap in the total workload among working parents. In one group of countries, the total workload of working mothers is higher than that of working fathers: in the UK, Estonia and Portugal, the gender gap in terms of the total workload amounts to 10 or more hours, and to between seven and nine hours in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Poland Romania and Slovenia. This gender gap largely derives from a much higher unpaid workload on women than on men. In a second group of countries, the gender gap in the total workload is comparatively low, amounting to three hours or less in Austria, west Germany, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Belgium and the Netherlands. In these countries, working mothers tend to do far more unpaid work than working fathers; however, this is almost entirely offset by the fact that these women also do fewer hours of paid work.

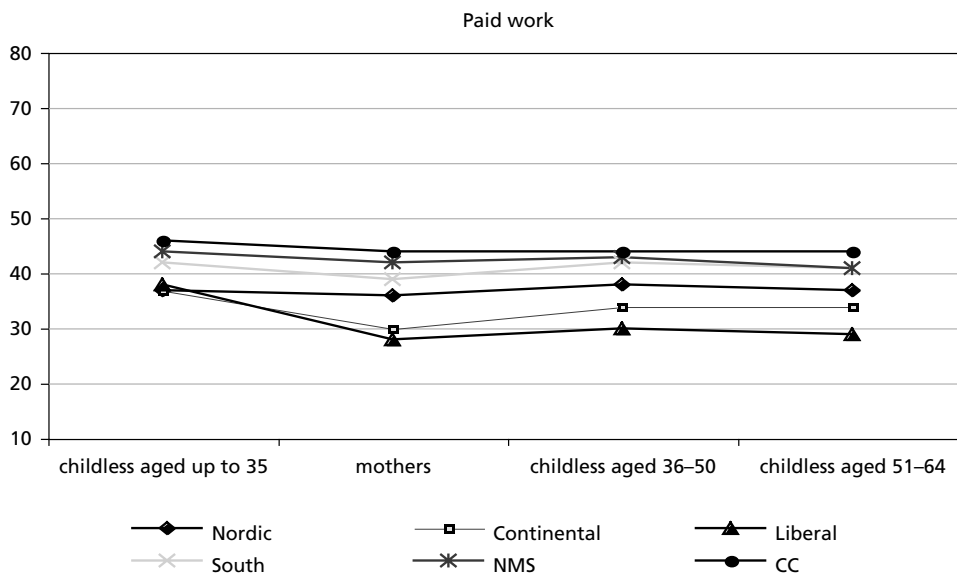
To summarise, working parents' time use patterns clearly cut across regime types. In terms of the total workload, parents in eastern and southern Europe tend to have a higher workload compared with their counterparts in western and northern Europe. However, Portugal stands out as a country where both working mothers and fathers tend to have a low total workload, as they tend to perform a lower level of unpaid work. For this reason, calculating averages over unpaid hours across regime types results in estimates that suggest that mothers in the liberal countries perform the most unpaid work, while the estimates for southern Europe mask the exceptionally high unpaid workload among parents in Italy and Spain. Therefore, country averages can be somewhat misleading.

The pooling of the NMS countries is also misleading, as a strong variation can be found across these countries, with a high level of unpaid work conducted in Poland, for instance, but a comparatively low level of unpaid work observed in Latvia. Moreover, hardly any regime differences in unpaid work

are evident among working fathers, despite the fact that country differences are substantial, ranging from almost 30 hours of unpaid work a week in Italy to just over 10 hours in Portugal (see Figure 6b).

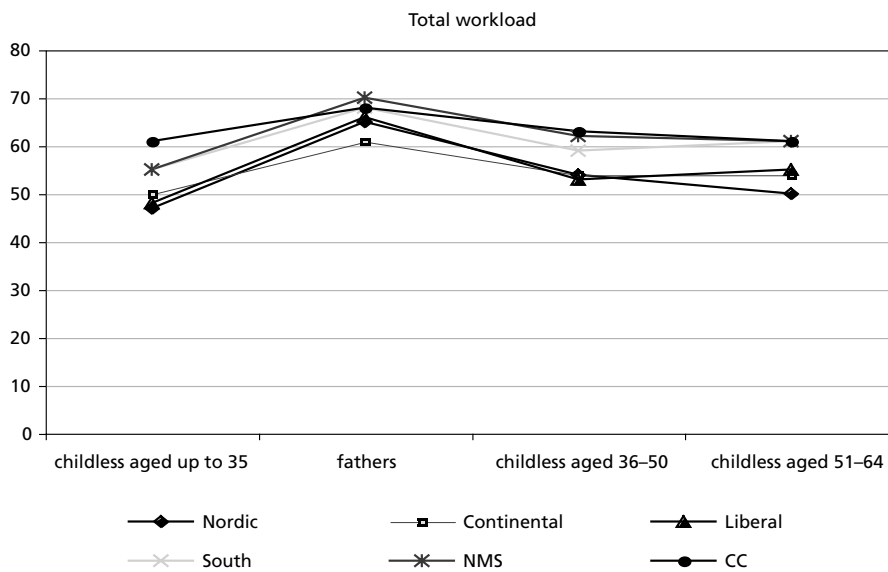
Just as it is impossible to make generalisations about working parents' time use patterns in terms of paid and unpaid work across regime types, the estimates for other life course stages, shown in Figures 7a and 7b, also have to be viewed with caution. However, due to severe sample size restrictions, it is not possible to calculate averages for the pre-parental and post-parental phases on a country basis.

Figure 7a Average total workload of working women, by life course and country group



Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

Figure 7b Average total workload of working men, by life course and country group



Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

Nevertheless, in all of the country clusters analysed, it emerges that the total workload of working parents tends to be far higher than that of childless women and men aged 36–50 years (Figures 7a and 7b). Furthermore, it appears that the difference between mothers and their childless counterparts aged between 36 and 50 years is more strongly pronounced in terms of unpaid hours of work than paid hours in all regime types. This suggests that in order to reduce the very high workload borne by working mothers, which tends to be higher than that of working fathers in all countries, particularly in the UK, southern Europe and in some of the post-socialist countries, the level of unpaid work needs to be more equally shared between the sexes. Alternatively, opportunities have to be provided to allow for an affordable outsourcing of unpaid care work to the public sphere, as seen in the Nordic approach.

Time spent on training activities and education

Training, or rather lifelong learning, is of major importance in life course policy for several reasons. Lifelong learning plays a key role in developing a coordinated employment strategy. How training provision is stratified across the workforce is of crucial importance for quality of life and social cohesion. In order to be able to participate actively in society, people need access to ongoing training and further learning. If access to training is stratified so that training provision is concentrated on the younger and/or more educated employees,⁴ greater inequalities and social exclusion are likely to emerge in the knowledge-based society. Higher levels of education and continuous learning, when accessible to all, can make an important contribution to reducing inequalities and preventing marginalisation. Furthermore, the competitiveness of the European economy is strongly reliant on investment in human capital that fosters the employability and adaptability of workers.

As regards the weekly number of hours spent on training, information was only available for those currently in employment. As shown in Table 7 (first column), training incidence – that is, the share of the working population who spend more than zero hours on training and education besides paid work – is quite high among both sexes in Finland, Germany, Estonia, Austria, Sweden, Denmark, the Czech Republic, predominantly among men in Slovakia and the UK, and mainly among women in Italy and Poland. In these countries, 30% or more employees of the specified sex participate in training. In contrast, the incidence of training tends to be particularly low in Bulgaria and Portugal (less than 10% for both sexes), as well as for men in Turkey and France and women in Greece (less than 15%), followed by men in Greece and Romania (16%). While in the majority of countries, women are more likely than men to participate in training, the opposite is true in the Netherlands, Greece and Slovakia.

The results also suggest that there is a negative relationship between training incidence and the intensity of training in terms of the number of hours of training. For instance, although Finland records one of the highest training incidence rates, in terms of training intensity participants spend an average of less than six hours on training activities. In contrast, in Bulgaria, Romania and Poland, where few employees participate in training, training spells tend to be much longer (14 hours for Bulgarian or Romanian women) In general, therefore, it appears that in countries where training incidence tends to be lower, the few who receive training tend to spend more time on it. Arguably, the length of training spells may in turn be read as an indicator of training quality.

⁴ Based on human capital theory, formal education is expected to be positively correlated with training, while age and training are likely to be negatively correlated (Becker, 1964).

Table 7 Incidence and length of training among working population, by sex and age

	Proportion of training participants (as % of those in employment)*		Average hours of training of participants (excluding zero hours)		Average hours of training among those in employment (including zero hours)			Ratio of average hours of training for those aged <35 years and those aged 50+ years
	Men	Women	Men	Women	<35 years old	35<50 years old	50+ years old	
Nordic countries								
Denmark	32.3	42.6	3.9	5.2	2.22	1.55	1.25	81
Finland	40.8	46.2	5.8	5.4	3.19	2.22	2.39	108
Sweden	33.1	36.2	3.7	4.5	1.81	1.24	1.33	107
Continental countries								
Austria	36.8	38.8	5.3	3.8	1.90	1.58	1.59	101
Belgium	23.8	28.8	5.6	4.4	1.72	1.13	0.86	76
France	14.2	28.6	(-)	6.0	1.83	1.00	1.02	102
Germany (east)	42.5	40.2	7.2	5.3	3.87	1.80	1.82	101
Germany (west)	37.9	35.9	6.0	4.9	3.12	1.64	1.13	69
Netherlands	28.6	25.3	6.6	4.9	1.86	1.58	1.52	96
Liberal countries								
Ireland	17.0	29.1	(-)	(-)	1.77	1.74	0.98	56
UK	29.7	27.3	5.2	5.7	2.12	1.14	1.12	98
Mediterranean countries								
Greece	16.2	13.4	(-)	(-)	3.24	1.53	0.35	23
Italy	24.3	31.2	7.4	6.3	2.19	1.56	2.26	145
Portugal	6.0	8.2	(-)	(-)	0.87	0.53	0.82	155
Spain	22.3	26.8	8.1	(-)	3.33	2.01	0.94	47
NMS								
Czech Republic	30.6	41.5	5.0	5.0	1.87	2.16	1.01	47
Estonia	39.4	37.1	6.4	5.5	3.35	1.93	1.23	64
Hungary	18.4	22.5	7.9	7.3	2.64	0.96	1.05	109
Latvia	19.5	27.0	9.3	7.1	2.86	1.50	0.70	47
Lithuania	16.0	25.7	7.2	7.2	2.15	1.34	1.18	88
Poland	17.2	35.8	9.0	7.8	3.37	1.31	1.26	96
Slovakia	38.7	29.4	4.1	5.3	2.00	1.64	0.81	49
Slovenia	28.6	27.4	4.7	6.3	2.14	1.46	0.81	55
ACC3								
Bulgaria	8.3	9.3	7.0	14.3	1.24	1.09	0.11	10
Romania	12.7	26.7	8.9	13.6	3.23	1.88	1.74	93
Turkey	8.1	18.0	9.4	6.9	1.58	0.34	0.03	9

(-) no reliable data available due to low sample sizes

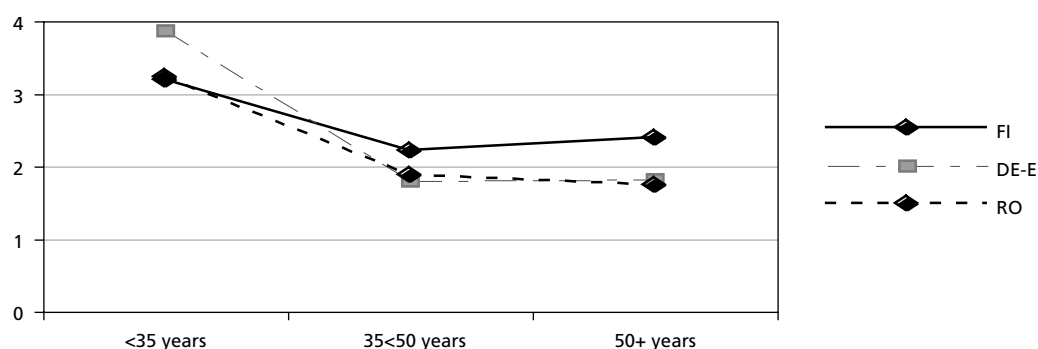
*Percentage of men and women in employment who combine paid work with training (more than zero hours as an answer to the question posed to those in employment: 'On average, how many hours per week do you personally spend on attending courses, studying or training?'). Those who are still in full-time education are excluded from the analysis.

Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003.

In Table 7, the results showing the average time spent on training according to three different age groups (with non-participation coded as zero) give an insight into how training is stratified according to age. The results indicate that in some countries, such as Germany (west), Estonia, Spain, Latvia and Greece, training strongly declines with age. The same is not true in other countries, such as Austria and the Netherlands, where training provision remains at approximately the same level for those aged below 35 years, those aged 35–50 years and those aged above 50 years. If a comparison is made based on the two indicators, training incidence and stratification according to age, most countries fall into one out of seven groups (see Figure 8a–8f).

In the first group of countries – Finland, east Germany and Romania – training incidence is generally high (Figure 8a). The highest level of training is received by the young generation, although those aged 50 years and over do not receive less training than those in the core working age group (35–50 years).

Figure 8a Average number of weekly hours spent on training among working population

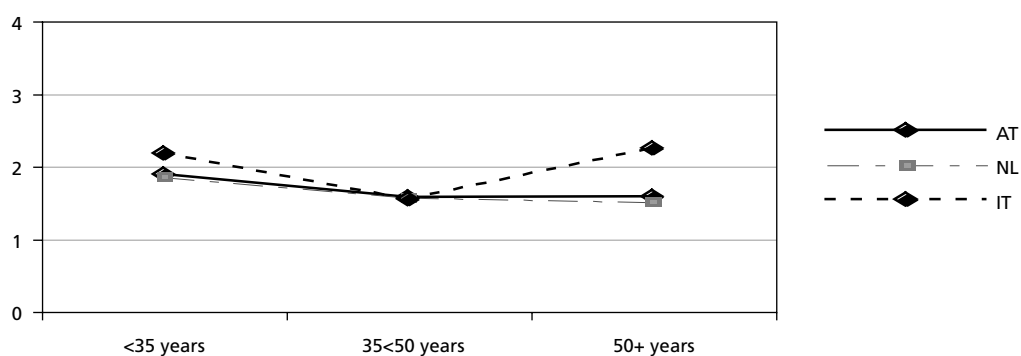


Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

In the second group of countries – Sweden, Hungary, France, Lithuania and the UK – a similar pattern emerges, except for the fact that training provision generally tends to be at a lower level than in the first group.

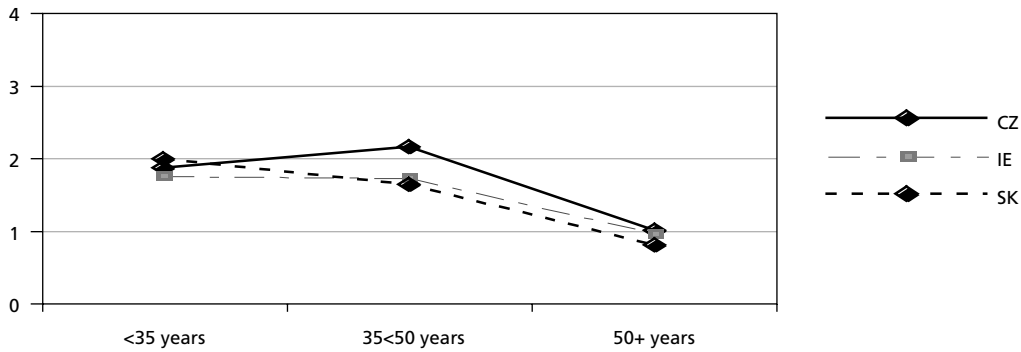
Few differences according to age can be discerned in the third group of countries – namely, Austria, the Netherlands and Italy. Overall, therefore, these first three groups of countries have one thing in common: the absence of discrimination against older employees when compared with their counterparts aged 35<50 years.

Figure 8b Average number of weekly hours spent on training among working population



Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

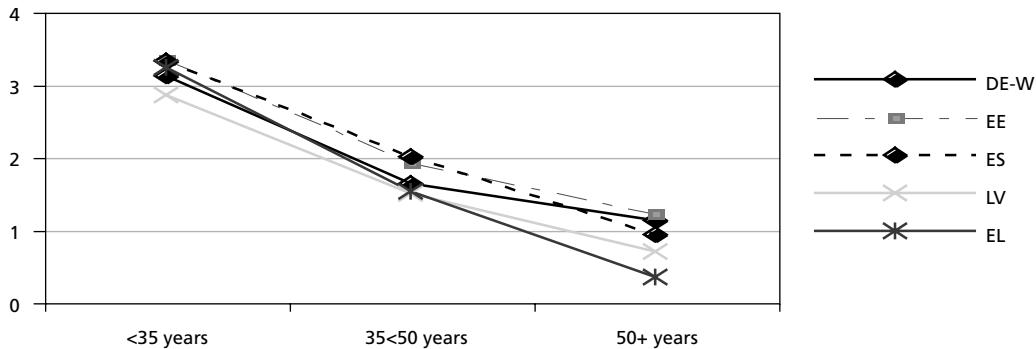
Figure 8c Average number of weekly hours spent on training among working population



Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

This is in contrast to the set of countries where age discrimination in this context is clearly discernable. Firstly, in west Germany, Estonia, Spain, Latvia and Greece, training provision is only high for the young generation but decreases sharply with age and in an almost linear fashion (Figure 8d).

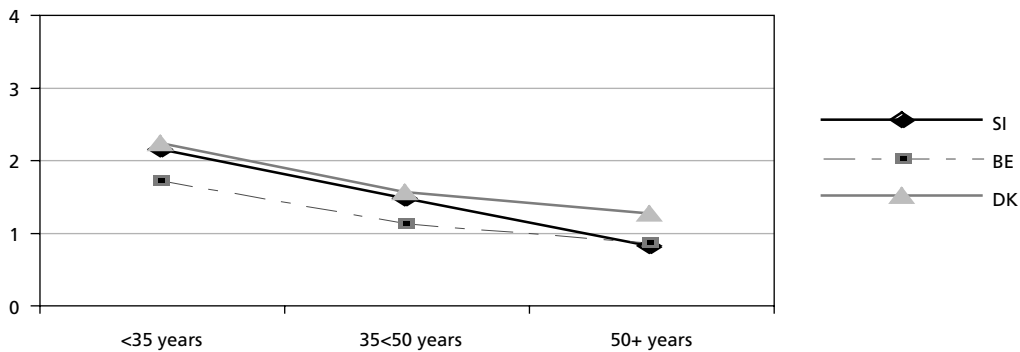
Figure 8d Average number of weekly hours spent on training among working population



Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

In Slovenia, Belgium and Denmark, training provision also declines with age. However, the decline is less pronounced (Figure 8e).

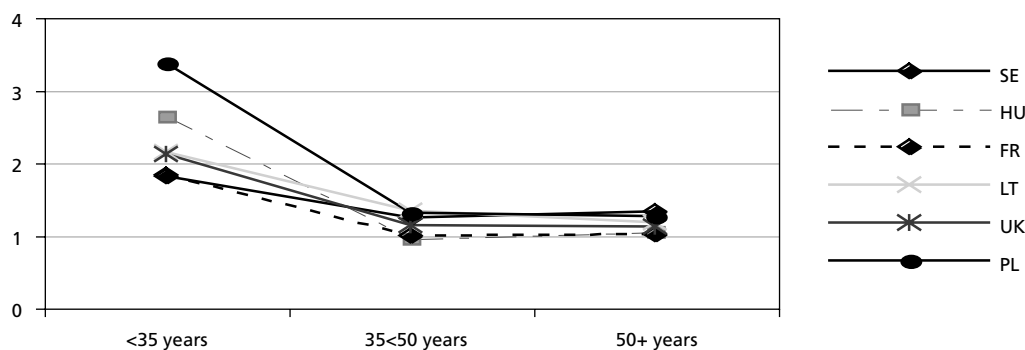
Figure 8e Average number of weekly hours spent on training among working population



Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

In the Czech Republic, Ireland and Slovakia, training provision is at a similar level for the young generation and those aged 35–50 years, but sharply declines for those aged over 50 years (Figure 8f).

Figure 8f Average number of weekly hours spent on training, working population



Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003; weighted averages shown.

Finally, in a third group of countries – Turkey, Bulgaria and Portugal – training provision tends to be low for all age groups. While in Portugal there appears to be little difference in training provision for the different age groups, in Bulgaria and Turkey those aged 50 years or over appear to be slightly more disadvantaged (not shown).

In evaluating these different patterns of training provision across age groups in light of life course policy, the most favourable pattern can be found in Finland, east Germany and Romania, followed by Austria, the Netherlands and Italy. In these six countries, training provision tends to be comparatively high and there is little sign of age discrimination when comparing those in the core working age group and those aged 50 years or over. A comparatively high level of training provision for those of core working age is also found in west Germany, Estonia, Spain, Latvia, Greece, Denmark, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Slovakia. However, these countries also show a high level of age discrimination. Turkey, Bulgaria, Portugal and Belgium stand out as the countries in which training provision generally tends to be quite low. With the exception of those aged below 35 years, this is also the case in Sweden, Hungary, France, Lithuania, the UK and Poland (Sweden is included here as, despite high training incidence rates, training spells tend to be short).

Finally, it is worth looking at training stratification according to educational attainment. As shown in Table 8, in most countries, those who are already well educated (that is, those who stayed in full-time education for longer) are more likely to partake in training than those with shorter school education. This is particularly true in the case of Slovakia, Romania, Portugal and Poland. In these countries, existing inequalities may thus be further compounded by a highly stratified system of training participation. For instance, in Slovakia, the likelihood of an employee being involved in training courses is estimated to increase by a factor of 1.6 with each year that employees have spent in full-time education. In contrast, training participation and educational attainment are loosely, if at all, related in the Nordic countries and in the UK.

Table 8 Effects of educational attainment on training participation, by logistic regression coefficients

	Education coefficient			
	Logit coefficient	Exp(coefficient)(a)	Pseudo R-Square (Nagelkerke)	N
Nordic countries				
Denmark	.05*	1.1	.02	428
Finland	.03	-	.01	379
Sweden	.06**	1.1	.04	478
Continental countries				
Austria	.10**	1.1	.04	363
Belgium	.21***	1.2	.10	412
France	.15***	1.2	.08	477
Germany (east)	.10**	1.1	.03	329
Germany (west)	.11***	1.1	.07	406
Netherlands	.10***	1.1	.05	530
Liberal countries				
Ireland	.11*	1.1	.02	404
UK	.07*	1.1	.02	439
Mediterranean countries				
Greece	.19***	1.2	.15	339
Italy	.17***	1.2	.14	415
Portugal	.29***	1.3	.21	369
Spain	.11***	1.1	.05	388
NMS				
Czech Republic	.19***	1.2	.10	455
Estonia	.11**	1.1	.03	447
Hungary	.19***	1.2	.09	416
Latvia	.21***	1.2	.07	456
Lithuania	.18***	1.2	.06	375
Poland	.28***	1.3	.16	305
Slovakia	.44***	1.6	.23	357
Slovenia	.11**	1.1	.05	343
ACC3				
Bulgaria	.13***	1.1	.08	294
Romania	.33***	1.4	.28	286
Turkey	.19***	1.2	.16	275

Logistic regression with a binary dependent variable (0= zero hours of training per week, 1= more than zero hours of training per week) and age at which person finished full-time education as the sole predictor. The sample is restricted to those who have finished full-time education and are in employment. ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

(a) Coefficient reports the effect of an increase in the years spent in full-time education by 1 on the odds ratio for training participation.

Time use preferences and work–life options

This part of the analysis looks at a wide range of preferences and options related to the combination of paid work with other activities, along with attitudes towards paid work and specific arrangements for work–life balance. These include reduced working time, trade-offs between time and income, part-time work, special care leave, lifelong learning practices, and various possibilities and expectations concerning early or postponed retirement. The analysis explores the availability and use of some of these options in the different European countries, as well as satisfaction with several dimensions: hours spent in paid and unpaid work, own free time, financial situation and division of household tasks. Finally, existing working time arrangements and the demand for specific policies are also considered. The analysis focuses on the 25 European countries in question, with the Eurobarometer 60.3 survey as the main source of information. It accounts systematically for the effects of life course and sex on the different kinds of preferences and options.

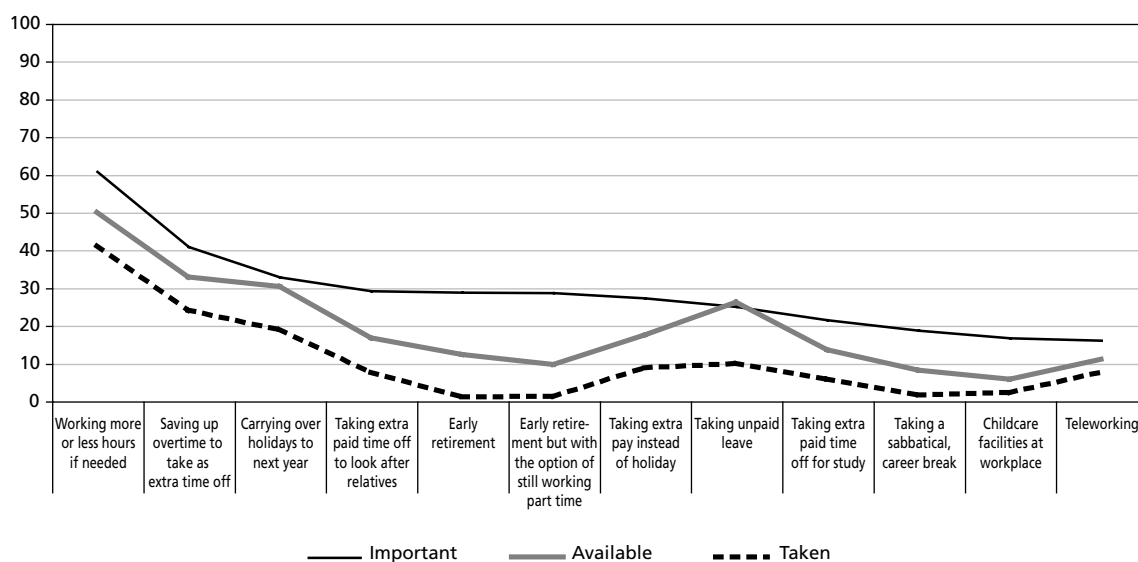
Important working time options

Evaluating the responses of Europeans with regard to the importance, availability and use⁵ of several working time options and arrangements (Figure 9) over the life course (Table 9), there appears to be a clear relation between the options that are considered important, those that are available and those that are actually used. With the exception of ‘taking unpaid leave’, which is considered as being more available than important, all of the other proposals are generally classified as being more important than available, even though the gap between them varies from 2.8% (for the option ‘carrying over holidays to the next year’) to 19.2% (for the option ‘early retirement but with the option of still working part time’). Although availability is obviously a precondition for the use of such options, their take-up also depends on other factors related to employees’ income or qualification levels, as well as to institutional conditions like working regulations, workplace features and enterprise characteristics (private or public, size, culture) in the different countries. Furthermore, previous research has shown that in a considerable number of countries, using some of these work–life arrangements involves risks that employees are not willing to take, or measures that the employer cannot or does not make available (Anxo and Boulin, 2006; Hildebrandt, 2006; Leitner and Wroblewski, 2006; Ponzellini, 2006).

Figure 9 shows the different options that are considered important hierarchically, while Table 9 shows their variation over the distinct life course stages of the respondents. For a better analytical approach, it is possible to group the different options for combining work with other activities into six types of options: those related to personal control over working hours (being able to work more or fewer hours if needed, saving up overtime to take as extra time off, or carrying over holidays to the next year); choices involving less working time but also less income (sabbaticals and unpaid leave); more time paid for by the employer for personal or family time (extra pay for study or for looking after relatives); less personal time but more money (taking extra pay instead of holidays); changes in workplace organisation or facilities (teleworking and childcare facilities in the workplace); and the reduction of the length of working life (early retirement).

⁵ With questions 2a, b, c and d from Eurobarometer 60.3 and CCEB 2003 as the main data source.

Figure 9 Importance, availability and use of options for combining paid work with other activities (%)



Note: Percentage of respondents who answered ‘yes’ in Q.2a, Q.2b, Q.2c.

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

In analysing opinions on the importance of several options for combining work with other activities, it emerges that control over working time – ‘being able to work more or fewer hours if necessary’ – is the main preference for combining work with other activities for almost two-thirds of the respondents (61%). Moreover, the preference for this option does not change much over the life course (Table 9).

The second most significant option – ‘saving up overtime to take as extra time off’ – was cited by 41% of respondents as being important, while ‘carrying over holidays to next year’ was deemed important by 32% of respondents. Life course has an impact on these options (Table 9). For example, the youngest respondents, who are in the labour market entrance phase, are more supportive of both arrangements allowing employees greater flexibility in managing their own working time. Presumably, people with care responsibilities in the rush hour of life do not have enough overtime to save or to carry over to other times.

Conversely, and not surprisingly, ‘taking extra time off to look after relatives’ and having ‘childcare facilities at the workplace’ are deemed more important by respondents in the rush hour of life, particularly by women with care responsibilities. These respondents, as well as the younger respondents, are the most interested in teleworking, even though they don’t consider it as important as other options for a better work–life balance.

The youngest respondents in the labour market entrance phase are also attracted by options allowing for less time off but more income – for example, taking extra pay instead of holidays; moreover, they are also interested in special leave and breaks such as ‘taking extra paid time off for study’ and ‘taking a sabbatical or a career break’ or even ‘taking unpaid leave’. Taking into account the preferences expressed by the younger respondents – who are more eager to accept time saving schemes – it can be assumed that these time saving schemes represent favourable options for improved life course policies.

Table 9 Options considered important for combining paid work with other activities, by life course (%)

	Childless up to 35 years old	Pre-school/ school children	Childless 36–50 years old	Childless >50 years old	Total
Working more or fewer hours if needed	62	62	61	56	61
Saving up overtime to take as extra time off	47	41	40	36	41
Carrying over holidays to next year	34	31	32	31	32
Taking extra paid time off to look after relatives	25	33	28	25	28
Taking extra pay instead of holidays	32	28	26	22	27
Early retirement	22	27	32	33	28
Early retirement but with the option of still working part time	23	28	31	35	28
Taking unpaid leave	25	26	24	22	25
Taking extra paid time off for study	28	22	19	12	21
Taking a sabbatical, career break	21	19	18	14	18
Teleworking	17	17	15	13	16
Childcare facilities at workplace	15	24	11	8	16

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Options such as ‘early retirement’ and its variant ‘early retirement but with the option of still working part time’ are viewed favourably where the gaps between the importance and availability of options are widest (Figure 9). They also appear to be more attractive to the oldest respondents in the pre-retirement phase. The fact that a total of just 28% of all respondents view these options as being important possibly signals their lower relevance for work–life balance, except for the specific group of people nearing the exit stage from the labour market.

Analysing the distribution of preferences by country (Table 10), it appears once again that options related to a more flexible control of working hours are the most popular. ‘Working more or less hours’ garners the widest support, with an average of 61% of respondents in all of the countries in favour of such an option. In Finland, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania and Slovakia, this figure reaches over 70% of respondents. Nonetheless, in Belgium, the percentage of respondents supporting this option drops to 34%.

‘Saving up overtime to take as extra time off’ attracts the support of 41% of respondents, representing the second most significant option among the countries considered, while ‘carrying over holidays to next year’ is deemed important by 32% of respondents. Little cross-national variation emerges in terms of the support given to the first possibility. Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Slovenia and Romania show the highest levels of support for this option, with around or over 50% of respondents citing the importance of this option; however, the southern European respondents appear to be the least interested in this possibility.

In the Nordic as well as northern and central European countries, respondents tend to be less interested in the option of ‘taking extra time off to look after relatives’. The overall figure for all of the countries amounts to 28%; however, Portugal, Italy, the NMS and Bulgaria attract much higher support for this option from respondents. Other options paid for by employers, such as ‘taking extra paid time off for study’ (21%), are less favoured by respondents in the northern European countries,

with the exception of Germany, and by those in central and southern Europe; conversely, such options are more appealing to those in the NMS and ACC3, particularly in Estonia, Hungary, Slovenia and Turkey.

Table 10 Options considered important for combining paid work with other activities, by country (%)

	Working more or fewer hours if needed	Saving up over-time to take as extra time off	Carrying over holidays to next year	Taking extra paid time off to look after relatives	Early retirement	Early retirement but with the option of still working part time	Taking extra pay instead of holidays	Taking unpaid leave	Taking extra paid time off for study	Taking a sabbatical, career break	Child care facilities at workplace	Tele-working
All countries	61	41	32	28	28	28	27	25	21	18	16	16
Nordic countries												
Denmark	58	56	28	30	20	30	20	12	22	22	10	29
Finland	71	35	19	20	23	22	16	22	24	25	8	16
Sweden	62	58	43	19	13	26	17	18	16	25	6	14
Continental countries												
Austria	60	44	43	29	16	20	23	13	20	12	18	17
Belgium	34	21	22	15	20	17	13	10	7	10	5	8
France	53	40	21	26	37	30	23	14	14	23	17	12
Germany	61	50	46	20	18	23	19	21	33	9	15	18
Netherlands	42	30	30	19	28	16	11	14	9	11	7	7
Liberal countries												
UK	60	31	36	22	29	32	27	28	19	11	17	7
Ireland	60	38	37	19	27	30	29	27	17	21	15	9
Mediterranean countries												
Greece	53	21	13	10	29	21	14	8	8	10	12	8
Italy	68	30	27	36	13	19	23	16	13	15	16	18
Portugal	55	40	23	35	27	17	29	19	19	10	30	6
Spain	57	34	19	27	34	19	39	30	11	20	22	29
NMS												
Czech Republic	75	48	49	48	38	37	36	51	24	26	21	23
Estonia	73	44	30	52	35	47	44	52	35	25	16	25
Hungary	68	44	50	30	50	46	39	35	39	27	22	21
Latvia	67	51	31	38	35	42	45	47	26	24	20	20
Lithuania	71	41	28	36	25	29	34	41	26	16	19	18
Poland	64	39	37	28	49	45	34	24	21	24	26	6
Slovakia	70	41	37	46	25	28	28	24	15	10	17	18
Slovenia	54	53	49	38	47	39	36	24	34	28	29	24
ACC3												
Bulgaria	67	47	27	38	37	41	49	26	18	17	14	15
Romania	54	50	16	17	24	21	33	10	21	21	16	8
Turkey	66	34	26	29	39	22	29	28	39	31	24	15

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Among the options catering for less working time but also less income, the option of ‘taking a sabbatical or career break’ is considered important by 18% of respondents in all of the countries,

attracting the highest support from the Nordic countries and France, as well as most of the NMS countries and Turkey. ‘Taking unpaid leave’ (25% of respondents in all countries) is also more popular among most of the NMS countries, with the Czech Republic and Estonia recording scores as high as over 50% among their respondents. The fact that wages are comparatively lower in the NMS may help to explain these results, suggesting that there are other factors besides income to consider. Moreover, looking at the results in Table A1 of the Annex, which shows the weekly working hours in the different countries, it emerges that working parents in the NMS – fathers and also mothers – work the longest hours, reaching close to 50 hours a week or even more. Thus, the preferences of respondents in these countries clearly indicate a need to take breaks to reduce the excessive paid workload for a better work–life balance, even if this might result in less income. Moreover, other kinds of leave, as illustrated later on, may not be available or may be available and not used because of the possible risks entailed, namely lower job security after taking the leave (Anxo and Boulin, 2006, p. 335; Hildebrandt, 2006, p. 262).

Preferences related to more working time and increased income, such as ‘taking extra pay instead of holidays’, were expressed by an average of 27% of respondents in all of the countries. This option tends to be more popular in the southern European countries (with the exception of Greece) and also particularly in the NMS and ACC3. The low wages in these countries may help to explain the reason for such preferences.

The importance of ‘childcare facilities at the workplace’, chosen by an overall 16% of respondents in all of the countries, was also the preference of around 30% of respondents in Portugal and Slovenia and was also generally more popular in the majority of the NMS countries; this preference may be related to the high rate of activity among mothers in these countries. The appeal of ‘teleworking’, chosen by an overall 16% of respondents, is highest in Denmark and Spain, where nearly 30% of respondents chose this option. Research in certain countries has shown that ‘teleworking’ is used by highly qualified people and more frequently by men than women (Ponzellini, 2006, p. 285). Nevertheless, the fact that it is the least preferred option overall for work–life balance may be attributed to the fact that it is either not widely available in the majority of workplaces, or because, once again, it involves risks when taken. It may also be related to the fact that people might only be interested in teleworking for short periods of time for work–life balance, but not for longer spells.

The possibility of ‘early retirement’ or ‘early retirement with the option of still working part-time’ (28% of all respondents, respectively) appears to be more appealing in France and in a number of the NMS and ACC3 countries.

Available working time options

Following on from the previous section, which dealt with the options considered important for combining work with other activities, this section aims to identify if these options have been made available in the respondents’ workplace in the past 12 months. One of the overriding conclusions of this analysis is that the most available options for Europeans are also those that are considered to be the most important: namely, ‘working more or less hours if needed’, ‘saving up overtime to take as extra time off’ and ‘carrying over holidays to next year’ (Table 11).

In the majority of the European countries considered, the availability of the option of ‘working more or less hours’ (50% of all respondents) is lower than the importance assigned to this option (61% of

all respondents). The exceptions in this context are Slovenia and the Netherlands, where there is a close match between its importance and availability. The highest gaps between the importance and availability of this option are found in France, Germany, Italy, Greece, the Czech Republic and Turkey (Table 12).

The option of ‘saving up overtime to take as extra time off’ was considered available by 33% of respondents overall. However, in Sweden and Denmark, over 50% of respondents confirmed its availability. In most of the Nordic as well as northern and central European countries, there is a close match between the importance and availability of this option. The most noticeable gaps in this respect are evident in Germany, the southern European countries and Hungary, Bulgaria and Turkey. The lowest rates of availability are observed in Greece and Turkey.

Respondents in both the Czech Republic and Slovenia report the highest percentages of availability in relation to the option of ‘carrying over holidays to next year’, while the lowest percentages are found in Spain, Greece and Turkey. This option was declared as being available by an overall 29% of respondents across all of the countries.

Among the options that involve less working time but also less income, ‘taking unpaid leave’ (26% of all respondents) was reported as being available by around 50% of respondents in the Czech Republic, Estonia and Latvia. The widest negative gaps, where this option is available but not considered as important, were evident in Sweden, Germany and Belgium (Table 12). In the majority of NMS countries, this gap was also negative – possibly for reasons related to job risks or income, as already pointed out. Less than 10% of respondents in Greece and Germany indicated that the option of taking unpaid leave was available to them (Table 11). The availability of ‘taking a sabbatical or career break’ (cited by 8% of all respondents) tends to be higher in the Nordic countries and in France, and lower in Germany and the southern European countries. Nevertheless, the widest differences between importance and availability in relation to this option were observed in the NMS and ACC3. This may be explained, as already observed, by the desire to reduce the working time load but the absence of opportunities to do so (Table 12).

Of the solutions involving more time paid for by employers, ‘taking extra paid time off to look after relatives’ was cited as being available by an overall 16% of respondents across the countries. In Italy, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Slovakia, more respondents indicated that this option was available (Table 11). The widest gap between the importance and availability of this option was observed in Portugal, Hungary and Slovenia; once again, this is most likely related to the high activity rate among mothers. The lowest percentage of respondents who indicated that the option of ‘taking extra paid time off to look after relatives’ was available was found in Germany. Meanwhile, respondents in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia reported the highest rates of availability of the option ‘taking extra paid time off for study’, which was deemed available by 13% of all respondents. In the Netherlands, Latvia and Lithuania, the importance attributed to ‘taking extra paid time off for study’ almost matches the level of availability reported. The greatest gaps between the importance and availability of this option were evident in Turkey, Hungary, Germany and Portugal.

Table 11 Options considered available for combining paid work with other activities, by country (%)

	Working more or fewer hours if needed	Saving up over-time to take as extra time off	Carrying over holidays to next year	Taking unpaid leave	Taking extra pay instead of holidays	Taking extra paid time off to look after relatives	Taking extra paid time off for study	Early retirement	Teleworking	Early retirement but with the option of still working part time	Taking a sabbatical, career break	Child-care facilities at workplace
All countries	50	33	29	26	17	16	13	12	11	9	8	6
Nordic countries												
Denmark	52	55	29	14	16	16	11	12	25	13	16	6
Finland	64	42	25	30	19	10	14	14	14	18	20	6
Sweden	55	55	51	34	20	9	9	9	14	10	11	3
Continental countries												
Austria	50	41	39	10	17	18	12	8	13	9	7	9
Belgium	22	19	23	20	10	9	9	7	6	6	9	2
France	37	33	15	17	13	11	11	13	8	11	16	6
Germany	41	34	29	8	7	3	16	5	10	4	1	2
Netherlands	43	32	33	17	12	16	8	13	7	8	5	4
Liberal countries												
Ireland	48	29	27	24	21	7	10	11	3	10	10	3
UK	50	23	25	29	17	12	12	15	6	13	7	7
Mediterranean countries												
Greece	37	8	8	8	5	5	3	5	3	2	2	3
Italy	46	20	25	18	14	26	7	4	7	2	4	2
Portugal	46	25	21	11	20	12	5	5	1	2	3	3
Spain	46	18	9	26	24	12	4	9	8	3	5	4
NMS												
Czech Republic	59	46	49	52	30	33	19	33	24	18	8	6
Estonia	64	34	28	56	28	37	24	21	22	20	5	7
Hungary	60	28	35	27	18	8	18	14	9	12	4	3
Latvia	59	39	31	50	25	27	27	21	16	18	9	13
Lithuania	65	30	37	50	21	28	26	11	15	10	11	11
Poland	54	35	38	30	17	23	19	20	4	13	9	19
Slovakia	58	36	47	32	21	36	12	11	12	7	4	7
Slovenia	55	45	49	23	16	15	21	8	14	6	7	6
ACC3												
Bulgaria	58	27	26	29	24	24	11	5	12	4	4	2
Romania	47	37	17	15	12	6	8	9	2	4	5	6
Turkey	49	12	12	24	9	18	14	7	4	3	8	7

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Table 12 Gap between importance and availability of options for combining paid work with other activities, by country (%)

	Early retirement but with the option of still working part time	Early retirement	Taking extra paid time off to look after relatives	Child-care facilities at the workplace	Working more or fewer hours if needed	Taking a sabbatical, career break	Taking extra pay instead of holidays	Tele-working	Saving up overtime to take as extra time off	Taking extra paid time off for study	Carrying over holidays to next year	Taking unpaid leave
All countries	19.1	16.6	12.2	10.6	10.8	10.7	10.1	5.1	8.3	7.9	2.8	-1.1
Nordic countries												
Denmark	17.2	7.2	14.0	4.3	6.0	6.2	3.7	4.5	0.6	10.7	-0.8	-2.7
Finland	4.3	8.8	9.7	1.9	7.5	5.2	-3.0	2.6	-6.5	9.7	-5.4	-7.8
Sweden	16.0	3.2	10.0	2.1	6.8	13.7	-3.2	0.4	2.5	7.1	-7.7	-15.8
Continental countries												
Austria	11.2	7.8	10.8	9.3	11.0	5.1	6.2	3.2	3.8	8.3	4.2	3.2
Belgium	11.0	13.0	5.7	3.5	11.8	1.2	2.2	2.2	1.8	-1.8	-0.8	-10.0
France	19.1	23.3	14.9	11.2	16.0	6.6	9.7	4.0	7.2	2.9	5.3	-2.2
Germany	19.5	13.2	16.8	12.4	20.1	7.7	12.6	8.0	16.7	16.9	16.5	12.8
Netherlands	8.0	14.1	3.1	3.1	-0.5	6.3	-0.8	0.2	-2.2	0.8	-3.6	-3.1
Liberal countries												
Ireland	20.4	16.1	11.5	11.9	11.9	10.9	8.7	5.3	8.9	6.9	9.8	3.4
UK	18.7	14.6	9.5	9.9	9.9	3.4	10.3	1.2	7.7	7.3	10.7	-1.4
Mediterranean countries												
Greece	18.6	24.8	4.4	8.8	16.2	7.6	8.6	4.9	12.3	5.4	4.4	0.7
Italy	16.2	9.6	10.4	13.9	22.7	10.8	8.5	10.8	9.1	5.4	2.7	-1.5
Spain	15.2	24.7	14.6	17.4	11.5	15.2	15.2	20.8	16.6	6.4	9.3	4.0
Portugal	14.8	21.6	23.2	27.0	9.2	7.6	8.7	5.6	14.8	14.0	2.0	8.1
NMS												
Czech Republic	18.7	4.2	14.2	14.8	16.2	18.1	6.0	-1.0	2.5	5.0	0.6	-1.2
Estonia	27.7	14.1	14.7	9.0	9.0	19.5	16.0	2.3	9.2	11.1	1.9	-4.2
Hungary	34.4	35.3	22.0	18.8	8.3	23.4	20.9	11.5	16.1	21.3	15.6	7.3
Latvia	23.8	14.1	11.7	7.7	7.7	15.5	20.0	3.6	11.9	-0.6	-0.6	-2.8
Lithuania	19.0	13.6	7.8	7.8	5.4	4.9	13.2	2.9	11.2	-0.4	-8.3	-9.2
Poland	31.3	28.6	4.6	7.0	10.0	14.6	16.4	2.1	3.6	2.4	-0.9	-6.1
Slovakia	20.6	13.4	10.5	9.6	11.7	6.5	7.4	5.5	4.8	2.9	-9.8	-8.4
Slovenia	32.9	38.4	23.0	22.7	-1.0	20.9	19.1	10.2	7.8	13.6	-0.8	1.0
ACC3												
Bulgaria	37.2	31.3	13.9	11.5	9.9	13.6	25.1	3.4	20.1	7.1	0.3	-2.5
Romania	17.0	15.5	10.9	10.0	7.9	15.2	20.7	5.8	12.8	12.8	-1.5	-5.2
Turkey	19.0	32.7	11.6	17.3	16.7	22.8	20.4	10.9	21.8	24.8	14.6	4.4

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Among the options related to more income but also increased working time, the option of ‘taking extra pay instead of holidays’ (cited by 17% of all respondents) was reported as being available by around 30% of respondents in the Czech Republic and Estonia (Table 11); in contrast, less than 10% of respondents in Germany, Greece and Turkey indicated that this option was available. In the Nordic

countries, the difference between the importance and availability of this option was relatively small (Table 12). In Sweden and Finland, the option of ‘taking extra pay instead of holiday’ was deemed as being more available than important.

The option of ‘teleworking’ is reported as being available by only 11% of respondents overall, compared with over 20% of respondents in Denmark, the Czech Republic and Estonia (Table 11). Only in the Czech Republic is the availability greater than the importance assigned to the option of teleworking; the reverse is true in all of the other countries considered (Table 12). In relation to the availability of ‘childcare facilities at the workplace’, which are deemed available by only 6% of respondents overall, the highest levels of availability are reported in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania and Austria. Portugal has one of the lowest percentages of reported available childcare facilities at the workplace; moreover, the gap between the importance and availability of this option is highest in this country (27%). In the NMS, the gap in favour of the need for more childcare facilities at the workplace is also high, pointing once again to the high activity rate of mothers in these countries.

The availability of ‘early retirement’, reported by 12% of respondents overall, appears to be markedly higher in the Czech Republic, where over 30% of the respondents reported its availability (Table 11); the availability of this option is also reportedly higher in Estonia, Latvia and Poland. ‘Early retirement but with the option of still working part time’, cited as being available by an overall 9% of respondents, has higher than average reported availability in Finland, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Latvia. In most countries, large gaps between the importance and availability of this option are apparent. The lowest levels of reported availability were found in the southern European countries.

Take-up of working time options

‘Working more or less hours if needed’ is the most frequently used option by respondents in the 25 countries considered (83% of respondents overall), and there are no life course effects (Table 13). In a large majority of countries, around 70% to 80% of the respondents used this option whenever it was available. The widespread desire to have more personal control over working hours for a better work–life balance is well illustrated by these results. The take-up of other options indicates the same trend.

‘Saving up overtime to take as extra time off’ is the next most frequently used option by Europeans (74% of all respondents), particularly by those living in the Nordic countries and Germany (Table 14), and among the youngest respondents and childless people aged between 36 and 50 years (Table 13). Once again, the widespread openness to schemes enabling employees to ‘save up’ time, particularly in certain life course stages, is illustrated by these results.

‘Carrying over holidays to next year’ was reportedly taken up by 61% of respondents to whom this option was available, and was particularly popular among childless respondents aged 36–50 years and among those over 50 years old (Table 13). The variation in the take-up of this option by country ranged from 30% in Latvia to 82% in Germany (Table 14).

The option of ‘teleworking’, despite its relatively low importance and very low availability in most countries, is one of the options used more frequently when available (reportedly by an overall 71% of respondents) for combining work with other activities (Table 13). As the results show, ‘teleworking’ is used most often by childless people aged between 36 and 50 years, 74% of whom report using this

option. Over 80% of respondents in Germany, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Spain, Denmark and the Czech Republic reported using this option (Table 14).

Table 13 Take-up of options for combining paid work with other activities which are declared available, by life course (%)

	Childless up to 35 years old	Pre-school/ school children	Childless 36–50 years old	Childless >50 years old	Total
Working more or fewer hours if needed	83	83	82	82	83
Saving up overtime to take as extra time off	75	72	75	74	74
Teleworking	69	70	74	71	71
Carrying over holidays to next year	57	60	61	68	61
Taking extra pay instead of holidays	50	48	50	52	50
Taking extra paid time off to look after relatives	35	49	41	50	45
Taking extra paid time off for study	50	38	43	33	41
Taking unpaid leave	40	36	38	38	38
Childcare facilities at workplace	20	48	23	29	37
Taking a sabbatical, career break	18	20	18	17	18
Early retirement but with the option of still working part time	6	9	5	20	11
Early retirement	5	7	5	12	7

Note: The ‘N’ of each option is the number of respondents declaring this option available in their workplace (‘yes’ in Q.2b of EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003).

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Among the options involving more working time and also a higher income, taking ‘extra pay instead of holidays’ was reportedly used by 50% of the respondents to whom this option was available (Table 13). The take-up of this option, as already indicated, tends to be higher in the southern European, NMS and ACC3 countries (Table 14).

Among the options allowing for more time paid by the employer, ‘extra paid time to look after relatives’ was used by 45% of respondents overall when available and is taken up more by older employees and by respondents with children (Table 13). This option is particularly popular in Italy, Spain and Turkey, with take-up rates of around 70% being reported by respondents (Table 14). ‘Extra time off for study’, reportedly used by an overall 41% of respondents, is clearly more popular among the youngest respondents. Moreover, the take-up of this option is higher in Germany and Italy. Nonetheless, it is important to remember that although used by a large number of Europeans, these two options, as already noted, have very low availability at 16% and 13%, respectively (Table 11).

Around 38% of respondents overall have taken ‘unpaid leave’ when available – an option that seems to be unaffected by the life course effect. This option is used most frequently in Italy and Spain, where over 60% of respondents report using this option. As already observed, the decision over whether or not to use this option is related to different factors, such as the existence of other kinds of paid leave or income. In spite of the lack of availability of options such as ‘taking a sabbatical or career break’ (18% of respondents overall indicated its availability), when available, such options are used more frequently by respondents with children. The highest percentages of usage are observed

in Lithuania, Denmark and Finland. However, its lack of availability in a large number of countries has made these data unreliable because of the low sample size.

Table 14 Take-up of options for combining paid work with other activities which are declared available, by country (%)

	Working more or fewer hours if needed	Saving up over-time to take as extra time off	Tele-working	Carrying over holidays to next year	Taking extra pay instead of holidays	Taking extra paid time off to look after relatives	Taking extra paid time off for study	Taking unpaid leave	Child-care facilities at workplace	Taking a sabbatical, career break	Early retirement but with the option of still working part time	Early retirement
All countries	83	74	71	61	50	45	41	38	37	18	11	7
Nordic countries												
Denmark	80	81	81	49	57	46	43	17	(-)	25	19	20
Finland	88	81	79	50	42	46	45	43	(-)	25	22	12
Sweden	83	81	68	65	34	28	27	39	(-)	8	11	2
Continental countries												
Austria	77	76	59	70	44	41	37	31	40	21	12	12
Belgium	69	70	75	55	38	26	30	24	(-)	11	(-)	14
France	72	73	51	49	59	49	33	21	42	16	15	18
Germany	92	88	94	82	52	41	72	51	65	(-)	11	2
Netherlands	73	66	70	70	32	28	20	17	17	0	8	8
Liberal countries												
Ireland	78	60	52	59	48	17	37	44	(-)	9	10	3
UK	83	70	60	67	45	42	39	41	32	16	16	5
Continental countries												
Greece	87	79	(-)	61	(-)	(-)	(-)	48	(-)	(-)	0	(-)
Italy	89	69	49	72	56	77	60	71	(-)	(-)	9	(-)
Spain	85	64	81	64	58	71	(-)	63	(-)	(-)	13	7
Portugal	74	66	(-)	46	59	45	(-)	21	(-)	(-)	0	(-)
NMS												
Czech Republic	89	72	80	70	38	38	42	50	22	20	4	5
Estonia	83	68	66	40	64	48	33	38	19	(-)	3	2
Hungary	84	63	44	63	44	9	43	26	(-)	(-)	10	3
Latvia	78	67	67	30	42	32	31	35	35	16	6	5
Lithuania	84	69	68	38	56	40	40	33	31	27	9	12
Poland	83	70	57	61	46	34	37	23	40	10	11	4
Slovakia	89	74	84	74	51	62	51	32	(-)	(-)	(-)	0
Slovenia	81	75	67	70	48	35	44	29	(-)	(-)	(-)	13
ACC3												
Bulgaria	94	76	87	55	60	42	35	32	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Romania	82	78	50	47	69	(-)	(-)	30	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)
Turkey	78	64	23	35	(-)	71	43	57	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003; (-) no reliable data available due to low sample sizes (N<30).

Due to the low sample size, ‘childcare facilities at the workplace’ is also an option for which the results are unreliable in most of the countries. When available, this option is used by an overall 37% of respondents. Naturally, respondents with children use childcare facilities at the workplace most often (48%). Once again, Germany is among the countries where these facilities are used more frequently, with 65% of respondents in this country reportedly using this option.

The options of ‘early retirement with the option of still working part time’ (used by an overall 11% of respondents) and ‘early retirement’ (used by an overall 7% of respondents) represent the least frequently used options for combining work with other activities, even if they are available. This may be related to the fact that a considerable number of employees do not meet the conditions needed to benefit from these options, for example age, number of years in the job and work regulations. Not surprisingly, the oldest respondents use these options the most frequently.

Satisfaction with working time options

For 87% of Europeans, using the option of ‘working more or less hours if needed’ made them fairly satisfied. ‘Saving up overtime to take as extra time off’, ‘teleworking’ and ‘taking extra time off for study’ left an overall 91% of respondents fairly satisfied. A slightly higher percentage of respondents with children (93%) said that they were fairly satisfied with the option of ‘working more or less hours if needed’ and of ‘saving up overtime to take as extra time off’. It is also noteworthy that ‘taking unpaid leave’ satisfied a greater proportion of the oldest respondents (86%) than the youngest ones (77%). In turn, the youngest respondents were the most pleased with the choice of ‘taking a sabbatical or career break’. It is interesting to note that the options ‘early retirement but with the option of still working part time’ and ‘early retirement’ resulted in the lowest levels of satisfaction (74% and 68% of all respondents, respectively).

The results shown in Table 15 and Table 16 give an insight into Europeans’ levels of satisfaction with spheres of their lives related to paid and unpaid working hours, time spent engaged in different activities and their financial situation.

Accounting firstly for the life course effect, it emerges that a greater percentage of the oldest and childless employees are satisfied with ‘hours spent on paid work’ (Table 15). Men with children appear to be the least satisfied in this respect and seem to have more reasons to complain about the hours they spend on paid work. This is understandable in light of the results presented earlier in Table 6, which show that men with children work, on average, much longer hours of paid work than women with children and men in other life course stages.

In relation to ‘satisfaction with hours spent on household tasks’, a very small gender gap emerges, with men being slightly more satisfied than women, with the exception of older women and childless people women under 35 years. Moreover, women with children are less satisfied than men with children, which is compatible with earlier findings showing that mothers work a considerably higher number of unpaid hours than men (see Figure 6). Nonetheless, it should be highlighted that the overall findings for the 25 countries under consideration hides, at country level, substantial gender gaps.

With regard to ‘satisfaction with hours spent on training, studies or courses’, a mild life course effect emerges, with younger childless respondents and those with children being slightly less satisfied than the other groups.

Table 15 Satisfaction with various spheres of life, by life course and sex (%)

	Childless up to 35 years old		Pre-school/school children		Childless 36–50 years old		Childless >50 years old		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Hours spent on paid work	69	69	65	73	69	67	70	73	68	70
Hours spent on household tasks	61	65	66	61	68	64	68	71	65	64
Hours spent on training, studies, courses*	66	66	66	67	73	71	71	74	68	69
Division of household tasks*	87	79	86	69	89	68	89	74	87	71
Own free time	73	65	59	53	68	59	74	67	67	60
Financial situation	56	53	54	54	57	52	63	58	57	54

* As this option was not applicable for a significant number of respondents, only the valid cases were analysed.

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

A clear gender gap, which is wider in some parts of the life stage, can be observed in relation to ‘satisfaction with the division of household tasks’. The life course effect is mostly felt by women, with those who have pre-school or school children, as well as older women, showing the lowest levels of satisfaction in this respect. Indisputably, women are less satisfied than men with the division of household tasks, independent of the life course phase. Conversely, male satisfaction with the division of household tasks is considerably higher in all phases of the life cycle.

In all instances, women are less satisfied than men with their level of free time. Satisfaction is even lower among women with children. These results converge with other findings already shown, contributing to an overall profile in which women experience greater time pressures because of their involvement in several activities.

‘Satisfaction with the financial situation’ is lowest in the earliest phases of the life course, particularly when respondents are in the entrance phase of the labour market or in the ‘rush hour of life’. In addition, women appear to be less pleased than men with their financial situation.

In terms of cross-national differences, it emerges that respondents in the northern and central European countries, and particularly in the Nordic countries, are the most satisfied with the different spheres of life, such as financial situation, hours spent on paid work, hours spent on household tasks, hours spent on training, studies and courses, and the division of household tasks (Table 16). In contrast, employees living in the ACC3 appear to be the least satisfied with the various life spheres.

As regards ‘hours spent on paid work’, men from the Nordic countries, the UK and Ireland in particular, along with those living in northern and central Europe (with the exception of Germany and France), report higher satisfaction levels than average (68%). Despite small differences, the same is largely true for women, except for women in Germany, who are more satisfied than the average. In the southern European countries (with the exception of Portugal and Italy), the NMS (with the exception of Estonia) and the ACC3, satisfaction with time spent on paid work is always below the average for both men and women, even reaching values below 50% in some cases. It is inevitable that these results would be compared with those on hours actually spent on paid work in different countries. Evidently, the countries showing lower levels of ‘satisfaction with hours spent on paid work’ are also those in which the average hours of paid work, particularly at certain times of the life course, are the highest (see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 16 Satisfaction with various spheres of life, by country and sex (%)

	Hours spent on paid work		Hours spent on household tasks		Hours spent on training/ studies/ courses		Division of household tasks		Own free time		Financial situation	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
All countries	68	70	65	64	68	69	87	71	67	60	57	54
Nordic countries												
Denmark	78	75	80	68	80	73	95	86	78	68	76	67
Finland	78	75	80	77	68	79	92	74	73	68	70	70
Sweden	85	86	86	74	77	71	89	79	86	80	83	80
Continental countries												
Austria	67	77	66	70	79	84	93	77	70	69	74	76
Belgium	78	82	74	67	71	69	91	86	71	67	69	70
France	74	78	65	67	64	66	92	65	75	68	59	55
Germany	68	68	62	58	79	78	89	74	67	55	72	70
Netherlands	79	85	76	65	67	67	89	79	75	68	73	69
Liberal countries												
Ireland	78	81	71	67	79	82	93	83	75	64	67	66
UK	77	70	65	73	79	80	89	73	79	73	59	53
Mediterranean countries												
Greece	71	71	57	58	58	63	81	54	77	56	54	55
Italy	58	57	48	59	43	41	86	61	57	42	62	55
Portugal	65	66	59	59	73	67	91	64	65	56	47	42
Spain	70	64	45	57	55	52	85	66	66	43	59	54
NMS												
Czech Republic	59	62	64	51	80	70	83	57	54	58	45	38
Estonia	79	72	76	73	80	78	90	77	73	65	48	38
Hungary	50	59	60	58	55	63	80	66	50	47	37	34
Latvia	65	66	71	64	59	76	83	67	56	50	39	34
Lithuania	60	69	55	58	58	56	80	61	56	50	32	28
Poland	55	58	64	64	50	66	87	71	51	49	44	46
Slovakia	54	61	74	62	59	78	89	70	59	61	28	38
Slovenia	58	65	60	68	56	56	91	69	60	56	64	68
ACC3												
Bulgaria	63	62	52	59	(-)	61	85	66	60	39	32	34
Romania	49	58	60	55	48	46	84	67	49	42	39	37
Turkey	48	51	44	41	44	(-)	75	64	67	63	43	41

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003; (-) no reliable data available due to low sample sizes (N<30).

In analysing ‘satisfaction with hours spent on household tasks’, an interesting and specific effect emerges. The value for all of the countries taken together shows a slight gender gap (65% satisfaction among men versus 64% satisfaction among women), which hides major differences when analysing men’s and women’s answers at country level: in the majority of the countries, women are almost always more dissatisfied with hours spent on household tasks than men are. In the Nordic countries, the UK, Ireland, Austria, Greece, Italy, Slovakia and Romania, the gender gap exceeds 10%. Looking at women on their own, the same effect is also evident in relation to ‘hours spent on paid work’, with

significantly lower levels of satisfaction emerging among women in many of the ACC3, NMS and southern European countries compared with those in the Nordic, northern and central European countries.

As already confirmed (see Figure 6), the average number of hours of unpaid work conducted by working women, particularly working mothers, is substantially higher than that of men, which might help to explain the gender gap just described. Even if men spent, on average, more time in paid work than women, the total workload of women – that is, hours spent on paid and unpaid work – would still be higher than that of men in a considerable number of countries (see Figure 5).

In terms of hours spent on studies and training, an extremely diverse cross-national distribution emerges, making it very difficult to identify particular patterns.

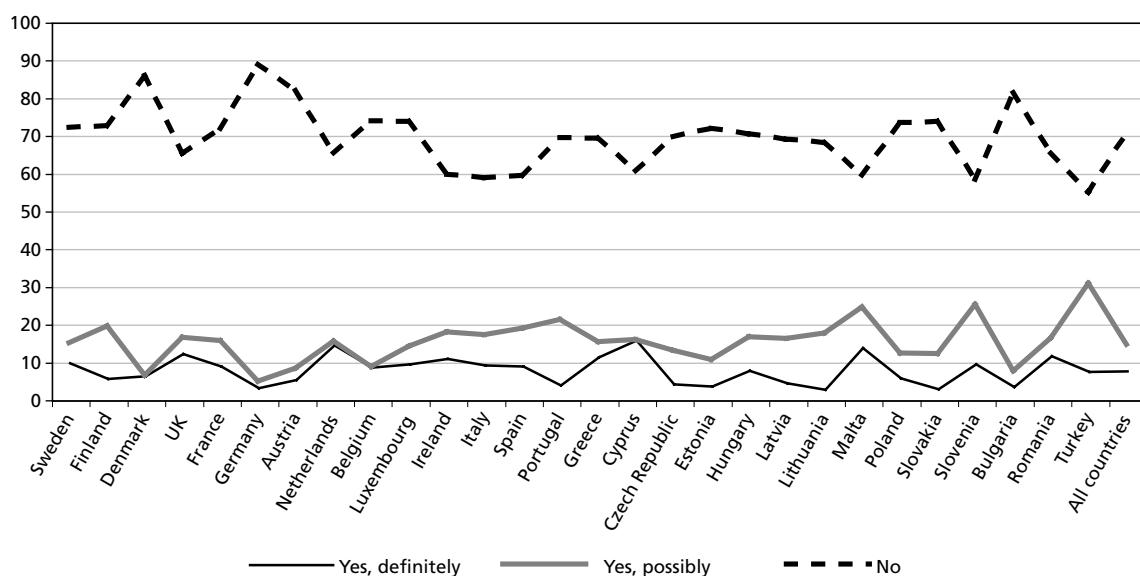
The responses of women in relation to ‘satisfaction with the division of household tasks’ by country indicate a lower level of satisfaction among women in this respect across all countries, and clearly reflect their dissatisfaction with the work overload identified earlier in the report when analysing time use. Moreover, the gender gap in relation to ‘satisfaction with the division of household tasks’ is much wider here than in relation to the other questions on satisfaction. Variations in the satisfaction levels of women in the different countries follow the same pattern already observed: those least satisfied with the division of household tasks are found in most of the southern European countries and in the NMS and ACC3, while women in the Nordic, northern and central European countries are more satisfied with the division of household tasks. Men’s positions are more homogeneous across the countries, although the gender gap persists in every country.

In relation to ‘satisfaction with own free time’, men’s and women’s responses again underline consistent gender gaps in all of the countries, although the gender gap is not as wide as it is for the previous question (Table 16). The variation by country shows the same general pattern. The responses in relation to ‘satisfaction with financial situation’ reveal a much wider gap between the countries than between the sexes.

Plans for reducing working hours

The previous analysis dealt with respondents’ plans for reducing their working hours as well as preferred options from a life course perspective. In terms of plans for reducing working hours from a cross-country perspective, it appears that the great majority of respondents (70%) are not thinking about reducing their working hours (although the results from a life course perspective showed that a greater percentage of the oldest workers were either definitely or possibly planning to reduce their working hours). In Germany, 88% of employees indicated that they were not planning to reduce their working hours in the near future (Figure 10). Similarly high percentages of respondents in Denmark, Austria and Bulgaria also gave the same response. It remains uncertain whether these negative responses are due to structural impossibilities, or simply due to a lack of will to reduce working hours. In the majority of countries, the percentage of employees planning to reduce their working hours does not exceed 20%. In the UK, the Netherlands, Slovenia and Romania, more than 10% of the respondents indicated that they were definitely planning to reduce their working hours.

Figure 10 Intentions regarding reduction of working hours in near future, by country (%)



Q. 'In the future, do you plan to reduce your working hours or not?'

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

The results in Table 17 show that the majority of those who are planning to reduce their working hours are thinking about using the extra free time to have more time for themselves (63%). This is also the intention of 70% of the childless respondents aged between 36 and 50 years, as well as those aged over 50 years. The countries with the highest rate of preference for this option (around 70%) were Finland, Italy and largely the NMS. Respondents from Turkey clearly had the lowest rate of preference for this option (less than 50%).

The second most favoured intention, chosen by an overall 46% of respondents, is using the extra free time to look after a partner, children or grandchildren. Respondents with children stand out clearly as having the strongest preference for this intention, with 65% of them expressing such a preference. Respondents in Denmark, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia expressed the greatest interest in this preference. Conversely, respondents in Latvia were the least interested in this intention.

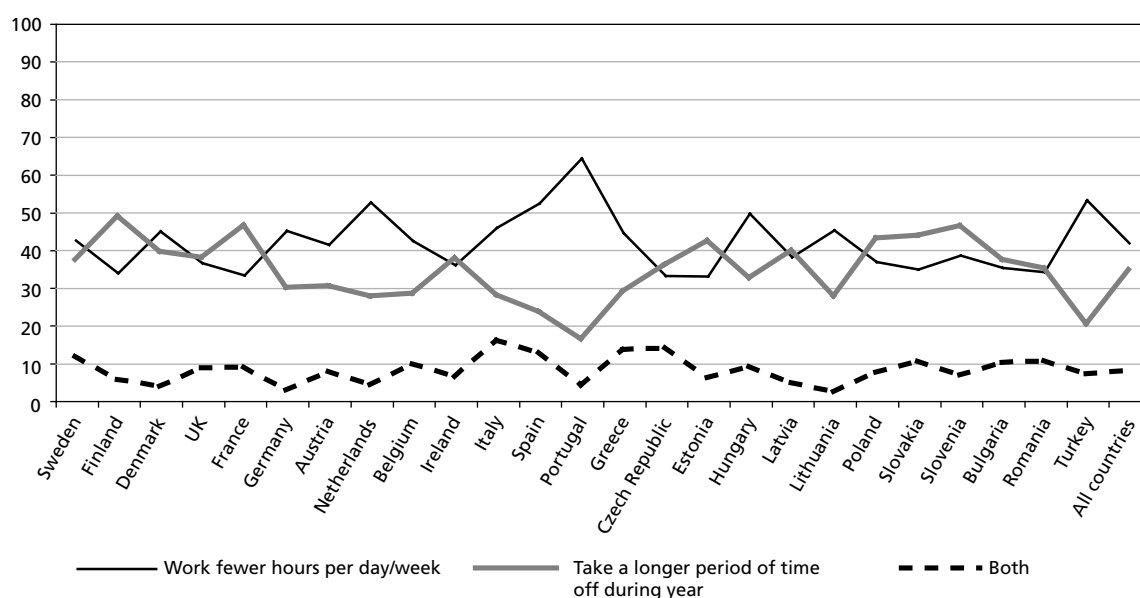
Clearly, the youngest respondents are the most interested in using the extra free time for studying, taking classes or training, with 30% of those who are childless and aged up to 35 years citing this intention. People living in Sweden, Finland, Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and a large proportion of the NMS countries expressed the highest preference for this option, with over 20% of respondents in these countries citing this option. Respondents in Greece were the least interested in using the extra free time to study or train. In turn, a greater proportion of childless respondents aged between 36 and 50 years (14%) said they would use the extra free time to look after their parents. The intention 'to do voluntary work' or to do 'nothing in particular' was most popular among the respondents aged between 36 and 50 years and those aged over 50 years. Using the free time to 'look after other relatives' was cited by only 8% of the respondents overall, thus representing the least popular option.

Table 17 Possible uses of extra free time by those planning to reduce working hours, by life course (%)

	Childless up to 35 years old	Pre-school/ school children	Childless 36–50 years old	Childless >50 years old	Total
Having more free time for myself	66	54	70	70	63
Looking after partner, children or grandchildren	31	65	37	37	46
Study/classes/training	30	21	18	11	20
Looking after parents	11	12	14	9	12
Doing voluntary work	8	7	13	13	10
Nothing in particular	8	8	10	10	9
Looking after other relatives	6	9	8	8	8

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

In the event of having the possibility to reduce working hours, the preferred option cited was to ‘work fewer hours per day/week’ (Figure 11). The highest rates for this preference were found among respondents living in the Netherlands and Turkey (over 50%) and in Portugal (over 60%); it was also particularly popular among the oldest employees and among those with children, while fewer of the young respondents chose this option. ‘Taking a longer period of time off during the year’ was the second most popular option, particularly among the youngest respondents, while being less desirable for the majority of older employees. In Finland, France, Estonia, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia, the preferred option is to take a longer period of time off during the year. Conversely, this option is less desirable for respondents in Portugal and Turkey. Using ‘both’ of these options was the least popular choice and seems to be largely unaffected by the life course.

Figure 11 Options for reducing working hours, by country (%)

Q6: ‘If you had the possibility to reduce your working hours, which of the following options would you prefer?’

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

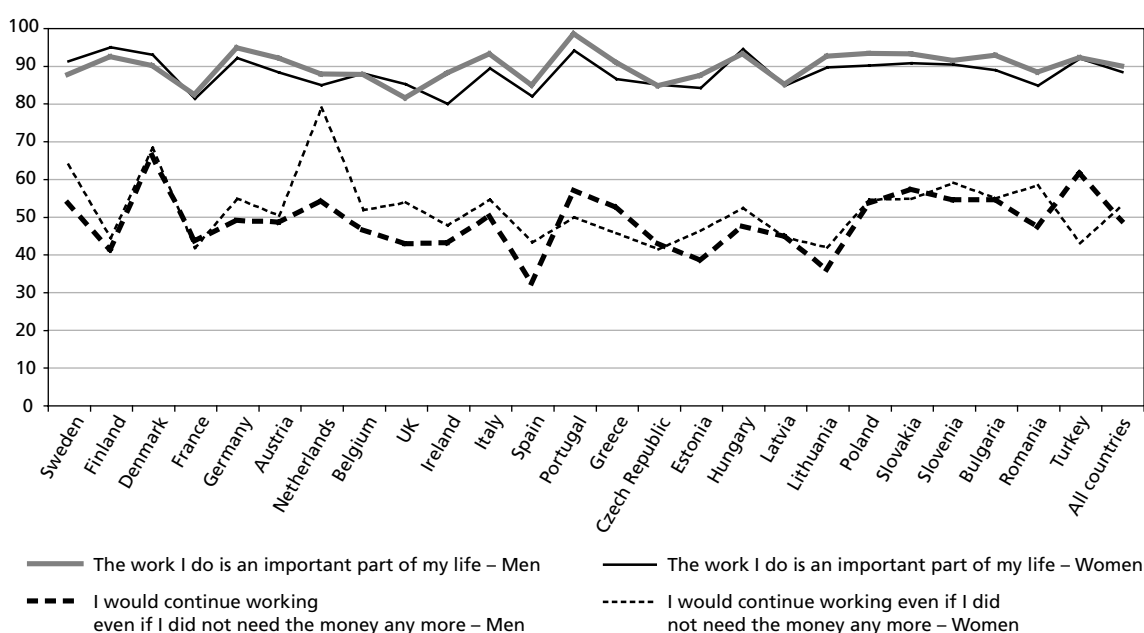
Attitudes towards work and working time

This section deals with attitudes towards work and its personal and social value, along with working time allocation and income, and attitudes towards part-time work.

There is almost general consensus among European employees that work is an important part of their lives, with around 89% of respondents overall agreeing with this statement (Figure 12). More respondents in Finland, Denmark and Portugal, and in most of the NMS countries, agreed with this statement. Those living in the UK and France, as well as women in Ireland, agreed the least with this statement.

Overall, and in contrast to some commonly held expectations, there is no gender gap in this context: in other words, women generally value their work as much as men do (Figure 12). However, from a cross-country perspective, some interesting features emerge. In the Nordic countries, more women than men agree with the statement that work is an important part of their lives. Conversely, more men than women agree with this statement in the northern (with the exception of the UK), central and southern European countries and in the NMS (with the exception of Hungary) and ACC3. In the Nordic countries, as already noted, women’s participation in the labour market is continuous over the life course, as paid work is compatible with maternity and represents a very well-rooted feature of women’s social identity.

Figure 12 Attitudes towards work, by country and sex (%)



Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

The idea that women value work as much as men do is also reflected in the answers to the statement ‘I would continue working even if I did not need the money any more.’ In fact, in the majority of the countries, more women than men agreed with the statement (Figure 12). Only in France, Greece, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovakia and Turkey did a greater proportion of men agree with the statement. This is a further possible indicator that work represents an important element of social identity and self-assertion for both women and men. Overall, around 51% of the respondents

agreed with the statement. Agreement is also more marked among women than men in all parts of the life course, but is highest among the youngest employees and those with children (Table 18) – another sign that maternity in itself does not necessarily preclude disinvestment in paid work.

The importance of work as a source of income is indisputable. Agreement with the statement ‘I would like to reduce the time spent working but I need the money that I earn’ is the second highest choice, cited by around 66% of respondents (Table 18). Employees with children, particularly men, agreed the most with this statement among the different life course groups. This is yet another possible indication of the high number of hours of paid work that many European parents have to do (see Table A1 in Annex). Thus, the inability to reduce working hours due to financial reasons becomes very clear from these findings.

Table 18 Work, time and money, by life course and sex (%)

	Childless up to 35 years old		Pre-school/school children		Childless 36–50 years old		Childless >50 years old		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
The work I do is an important part of my life	86	87	90	87	90	90	92	89	89	88
I would continue working even if I did not need the money any more	48	57	51	53	47	52	43	48	48	52
I would like to reduce the time spent working, but I need the money that I earn	66	64	72	65	67	66	61	62	68	65
I would like to reduce the time spent working, even if I earn less money	12	12	13	15	13	13	17	16	13	14
I would like to work more hours if it enabled me to earn more money	57	55	54	44	48	48	40	39	51	46
I could easily get by with less money	15	12	13	14	18	13	21	18	16	14

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Financial pressures as a reason for not reducing working hours may be concluded from the respondents’ other answers (Table 18). A substantial number of employees said they would not mind working more hours if it enabled them to earn more money (around 48%). At same time, only a minority wanted to reduce their time working time if it possibly meant that they would earn less money (around 14%). Young employees are still more interested than older workers in working more hours if it enables them to earn more money. Clearly, the oldest respondents are the least interested in sustaining or increasing their working hours: more respondents among the oldest age group expressed a preference for reducing their working hours, even if it meant that they would earn less money. Similarly, more respondents among the oldest age group agreed that they ‘could easily get by with less money’, a statement with which most young employees disagree.

Overall, only a minority of respondents (around 15%) agreed that they could easily get by with less money (Table 18). Among all of the countries considered, Denmark showed the highest level of agreement with this statement, among both its male and female respondents (close to 40%). As could be expected, respondents in many of the eastern European countries – such as Estonia, Hungary, Latvia or Slovakia – tended to agree considerably less that they could easily get by with less money. This is understandable, given that the GDP per capita is markedly lower in these countries than in other European countries. The same patterns occurred among the countries in relation to the prospect

of reducing the time spent working, even if it meant earning less money (Table 19). Only among male respondents, and even more so among female respondents, in the Nordic countries and in the majority of the northern and central European countries did a higher proportion of people than average agree with this prospect.

Table 19 Attitudes to work, time and money, by country and sex (%)

	The work I do is an important part of my life		I would like to reduce the time spent working, but I need the money that I earn		I would continue working, even if I did not need the money any more		I would like to work more hours if it enabled me to earn more money		I would like to reduce the time spent working, even if I earn less money	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
All countries	89.3	88.1	67.4	64.6	48.1	52.5	51.4	45.8	13.3	14.4
Nordic countries										
Denmark	89.8	92.8	48.5	48.0	65.9	68.2	38.6	17.5	23.5	26.0
Finland	92.1	94.8	67.0	69.1	40.9	44.2	34.0	29.7	20.9	17.7
Sweden	87.4	91.1	58.9	64.4	53.3	63.7	29.3	26.4	16.3	17.1
Continental countries										
Austria	91.7	88.1	53.3	49.8	48.2	50.2	40.9	39.1	10.5	16.2
Belgium	87.4	87.9	63.8	60.9	46.1	51.6	47.4	34.0	15.4	15.8
France	82.0	81.2	75.5	76.8	43.2	41.6	52.0	44.4	16.0	18.4
Germany	94.4	92.0	59.6	48.6	48.7	54.6	46.2	43.3	7.6	9.9
Netherlands	87.5	84.8	49.7	37.9	53.8	78.8	29.4	23.4	19.4	16.7
Liberal countries										
Ireland	87.8	79.8	71.5	63.7	42.7	47.6	45.5	30.2	14.8	20.6
UK	81.2	85.0	76.2	61.4	42.5	53.7	50.2	35.8	18.0	19.1
Mediterranean countries										
Greece	90.6	86.4	75.4	75.8	52.2	45.5	59.1	48.5	13.4	19.7
Italy	92.8	89.2	69.0	63.2	49.8	54.4	52.3	45.1	17.3	25.5
Portugal	98.1	94.0	72.4	83.1	56.7	49.7	59.0	52.5	13.3	12.0
Spain	84.5	81.8	83.0	73.3	32.1	43.2	36.8	41.5	14.1	16.5
NMS										
Czech Republic	84.4	84.9	65.1	64.9	42.5	41.2	47.6	45.3	8.4	10.2
Estonia	87.1	84.1	65.3	70.1	38.2	46.2	75.1	68.1	5.3	7.2
Hungary	92.9	94.2	74.8	74.8	47.1	52.2	45.7	48.7	2.9	4.9
Latvia	84.8	84.6	73.8	77.2	44.5	44.4	68.8	60.6	12.2	14.1
Lithuania	92.2	89.4	78.7	72.9	35.7	41.7	70.4	67.4	4.8	9.2
Poland	92.9	90.0	75.7	68.8	53.3	54.4	62.7	57.5	16.0	13.1
Slovakia	92.8	90.6	65.6	66.4	56.9	54.7	67.2	65.0	3.6	2.2
Slovenia	91.1	90.2	55.3	62.3	54.2	58.8	51.4	48.0	21.2	17.6
ACC3										
Bulgaria	92.5	88.7	78.1	75.1	54.1	54.8	82.9	81.9	6.8	9.0
Romania	88.0	84.7	71.1	72.4	47.0	58.3	75.3	78.5	8.4	10.4
Turkey	91.8	91.8	75.5	77.6	61.2	42.9	67.3	59.2	18.0	14.3

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Attitudes to part-time work

Almost half of the respondents (around 46%) considered part-time work as being bad for one's career or without benefit for the employee and the work rhythm (Table 20). As other authors have noted, for a considerable number of respondents, there seems to be a perception of risks in relation to part-time work, besides the fact that it is used mostly by under-qualified employees (Hildebrandt, 2006, p. 263).

Around 47% of the respondents agreed with the statement that 'working part time (or taking frequent leave) usually means that you have to do more in less time'; agreement with this statement increased over the life course, reaching 53% among older women (aged over 50 years). Of those who agree that 'working part time (or taking frequent leave) is bad for someone's career', the rate of agreement is highest among the oldest respondents (49%) and among men with children (48%), while it is lowest among the youngest employees (around 44%).

Table 20 Statements about working part time, by life course and sex (%)

	Childless up to 35 years old		Pre-school/school children		Childless 36–50 years old		Childless >50 years old		Total	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Working part time (or taking frequent leave) is an indicator that someone is less committed to his/her work	25	21	28	21	27	21	27	22	27	21
Working part time (or taking frequent leave) is bad for someone's career	44	43	48	44	47	45	50	48	47	45
Working part time (or taking frequent leave) usually means that you have to do more in less time	42	45	46	47	47	50	48	53	45	48
Working part time (or taking frequent leave) means that you get less interesting tasks to do	33	31	35	29	36	32	36	33	35	31
Working part time (or taking frequent leave) is possible in my present job	32	41	29	47	31	37	33	46	31	43

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Looking at the cross-country differences (Table 21), agreement with the opinion that part-time work is bad for one's career appears to be relatively low in Belgium, Ireland and the UK (around 30%), while it rises to above-average levels for men in a substantial number of countries and for women in Bulgaria, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands and Greece as well as for the majority of the NMS countries. In analysing agreement with statements like 'working part time is possible in my present job' compared with the previous question, it is tempting to conclude that it is in fact the countries in which part-time work is most available where a greater proportion of people perceive more negative consequences; this is particularly true in the case of the Nordic countries and in northern and central Europe. However, in the UK, Ireland and Belgium, where between 50% and 72% of women declared that working part time was possible in their present job, only around 27% of these women considered that part-time work would be bad for their career. In contrast, men in the same countries agreed considerably more with the latter statement.

Around 37% of European employees agree that it is possible for them to 'work part time (or to take frequent leave)' in their present job. Overall, only very mild effects are evident from a life course perspective (Table 20). However, a more pronounced life course effect emerges among women. More

women with children and childless women aged over 50 years agree that it is possible for them to work part time or to take frequent leave. As already mentioned, from a cross-country perspective, it appears that part-time work is more available, particularly for women, in the Nordic countries, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany, the UK, Ireland and Italy, and less so in the other southern European countries, the NMS and ACC3 (Table 21).

Table 21 Statements about working part time, by country and sex (%)

	Working part time (or taking frequent leave) is an indicator that someone is less committed to his/her work		Working part time (or taking frequent leave) is bad for someone's career		Working part time (or taking frequent leave) usually means that you have to do more in less time		Working part time (or taking frequent leave) means that you get less interesting tasks to do		Working part time (or taking frequent leave) is possible in my present job	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
All countries	27	21	47	45	45	48	35	31	31	43
Nordic countries										
Denmark	22	14	51	44	43	45	35	31	41	60
Finland	28	21	50	41	55	53	43	34	47	61
Sweden	20	12	66	52	71	65	46	34	51	59
Continental countries										
Austria	24	16	52	42	43	37	42	32	28	43
Belgium	16	15	32	27	38	39	26	27	37	50
France	28	20	49	41	50	48	41	36	36	56
Germany	17	14	52	50	47	58	39	36	24	53
Netherlands	28	20	46	47	55	57	39	35	52	75
Liberal countries										
Ireland	16	10	28	26	42	39	24	20	28	50
UK	26	10	41	27	40	39	35	26	40	72
Mediterranean countries										
Greece	25	20	60	57	50	47	31	17	31	40
Italy	40	32	55	43	32	39	39	26	28	47
Portugal	34	27	43	37	37	41	29	28	26	23
Spain	21	22	34	38	33	42	13	12	27	34
NMS										
Czech Republic	30	21	46	43	39	39	47	42	27	35
Estonia	35	35	55	60	56	61	39	39	29	27
Hungary	18	19	41	50	27	36	28	27	17	19
Latvia	53	46	59	63	54	56	47	41	23	34
Lithuania	28	28	46	48	47	59	16	17	23	31
Poland	31	28	50	48	54	59	43	36	41	39
Slovakia	28	19	43	38	50	46	46	36	24	24
Slovenia	34	23	63	53	49	44	41	35	19	28
ACC3										
Bulgaria	29	28	52	61	55	64	24	20	19	14
Romania	33	28	31	38	31	28	25	30	17	20
Turkey	26	29	34	43	29	47	29	27	21	20

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Moderate life course effects also emerge in relation to agreement with the statement that ‘working part time (or taking frequent leave) means that you get less interesting tasks to do’. Nevertheless, agreement with the latter statement seems to increase only slightly over the life course, reaching around 35% among the oldest employees. Male employees also tend to agree more with the statement in question. Agreement with the statement that ‘working part time (or taking frequent leave) is an indicator that someone is less committed to his/her work’ does not reveal any significant life course effects. From a cross-country perspective, agreement with these two statements about part-time work is very varied, and no specific patterns emerge.

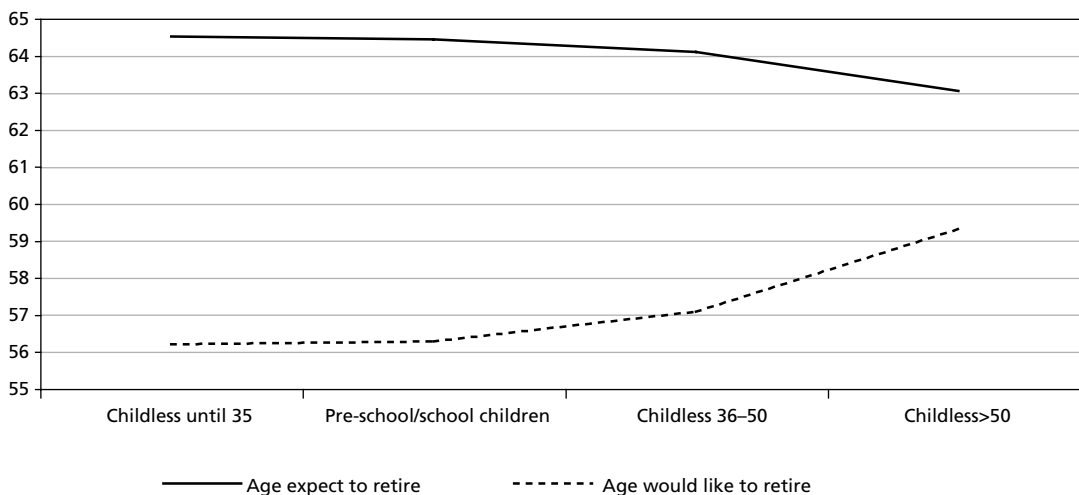
Overall, the findings imply a certain reluctance in relation to part-time work, which is in harmony with other research revealing that part-time work can be perceived by employees as being associated with obstacles, penalties and risks related to social protection, job security or career problems (Bielensky et al, 2002; Hildebrandt, 2006).

Attitudes towards retirement

Gap between desired and expected age of retirement

The results indicate that the majority of Europeans wish to retire before the age of 60 years, although there are some exceptions in this respect (Figure 13). Respondents from Sweden, and particularly Denmark, would like to retire later than 60 years of age (Figure 14). In principle, Danish respondents should be the most satisfied in this context, since there is a close match between what they wish for and what is expected to happen in reality. In most cases, however, there is a gap between respondents’ wishes and expectations in relation to the desired and expected age of retirement (Figures 13 and 14).

Figure 13 Average expected and desired age of retirement, by life course*



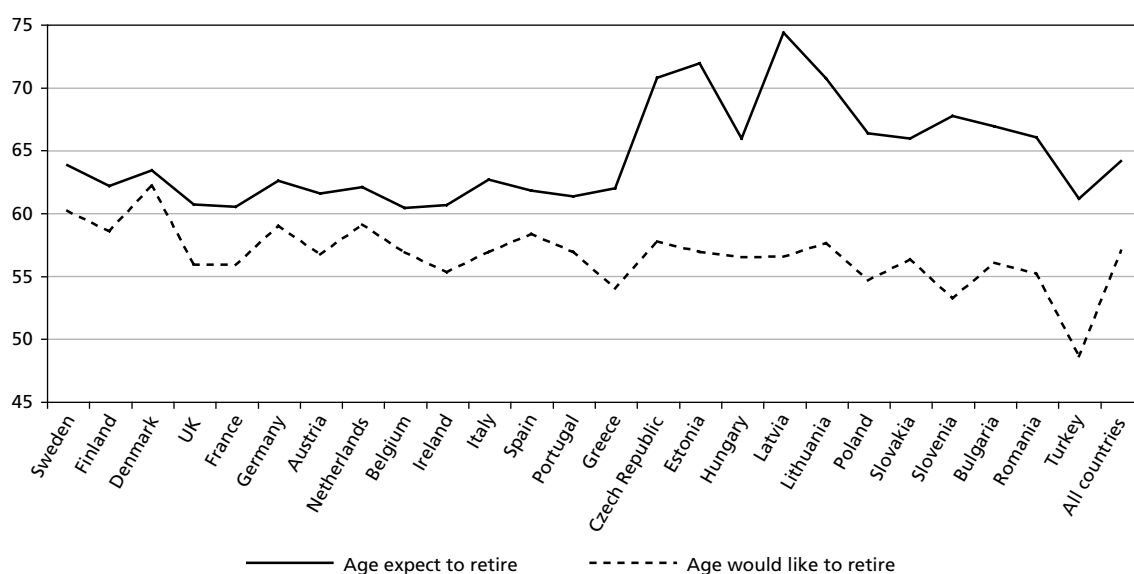
*All respondents who are not retired.

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

The average age at which European employees expect to retire decreases along the life course, while the average age at which they would like to retire increases (Figure 13). Thus, the greatest discrepancy between expectations and desires can be found among the youngest respondents, while it is much smaller among the oldest respondents. The youngest respondents expect to retire, on average, at a little under 65 years of age and would like to retire at a little over 55 years of age.

The main trends identified above are visible in each group of countries, although important differences emerge in the size of the discrepancies between expectations and desires (Figure 14). These discrepancies are smallest in the Nordic countries: the average age at which respondents expect to retire is around 63 years of age, while their desired age of retirement is around 60 years. The greatest discrepancies are found among the youngest respondents in the NMS and ACC3. In the NMS, on average, the youngest respondents expect to retire later than 70 years of age, while the desired age of retirement is around 55 years of age. In these countries, the highest discrepancy among the oldest respondents is also evident. The expected or actual age of retirement of the oldest respondents is just over 60 years, while the desired age of retirement is around 58 years.

Figure 14 Average expected and desired age of retirement, by country*

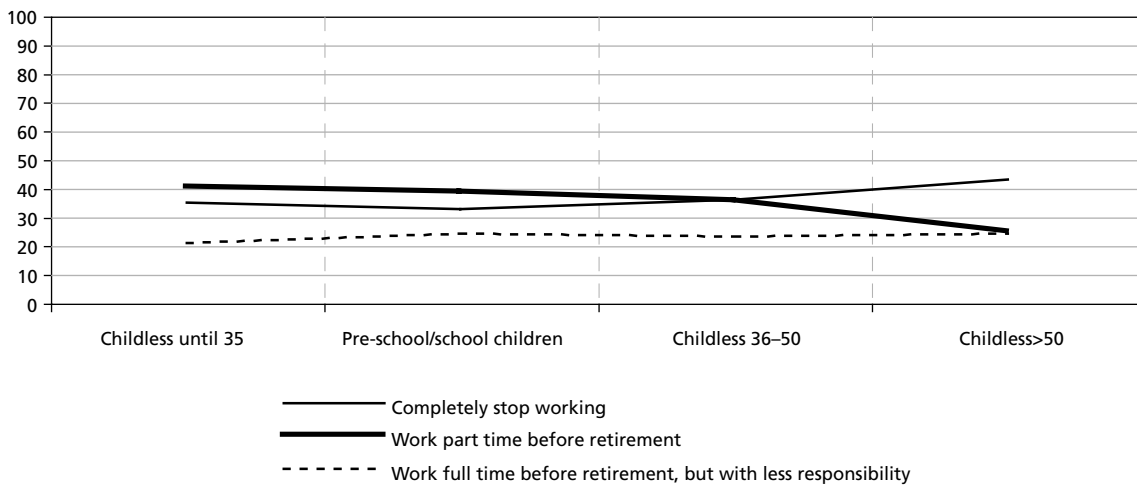


*All respondents who are not retired.
Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Respondents from the Czech Republic, Estonia and particularly Latvia and Lithuania stand out as being those who expect to retire later, at over 70 years of age on average. In Latvia, the average age at which individuals expect to retire even exceeds 74 years of age; in contrast, respondents from Turkey expect to retire at around 61 years of age.

Working part time before retirement

From a life course perspective, working part time before retirement is the second most popular option among European employees (almost 33%) as a way of ensuring a smoother transition from the labour market to retirement (Figure 15). However, nearly 38% of respondents preferred to stop working completely, while around 23% chose to work full time before retirement. Women have a much greater preference than men for working part time before retirement, with 39% of women compared with 32% of men choosing this option (Table 22).

Figure 15 Preferred options when close to retirement, by life course (%)

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

A flexible transition into retirement appeals most to the youngest employees, with a greater percentage of them (around 40%) preferring to work part time before retirement (Figure 15). Workers in the ACC3 generally seem to be less interested in working part time before retirement compared with those from other European countries. In turn, the most preferred option for the oldest employees in the majority of the countries is to stop working completely, with around 43% of them choosing this option. Only in southern Europe is this preference the most chosen option in every phase of the life course. Overall, to ‘work before retirement but with less responsibility’ is the least appealing option among the different countries. Nevertheless, it is the most popular option in the ACC3, especially among the youngest employees (Table 22).

Postponing age of retirement

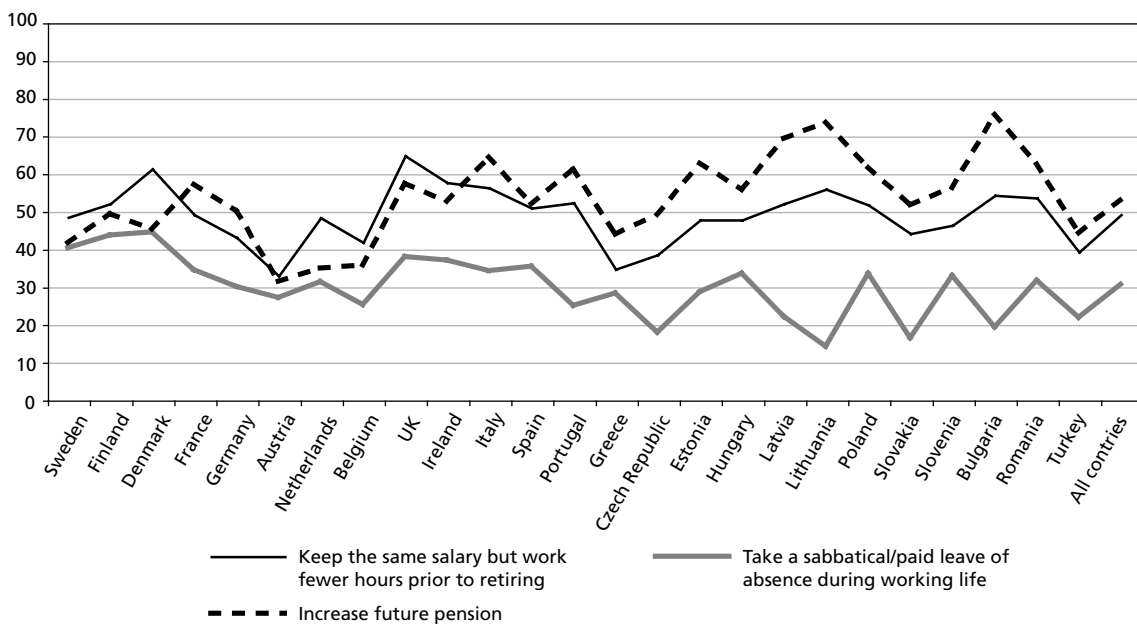
In relation to possible trade-offs for postponing the age of retirement by two to three years, the most preferred exchange is for an increase in the future pension, chosen by 53% of respondents overall (Figure 16). Postponing retirement and keeping the same salary but reducing working hours is the preferred option of 49% of respondents overall, while postponing retirement in exchange for a sabbatical or paid leave during one’s working life is the preferred option of 31% of respondents overall. The popularity of all three options gradually decreases towards the later stages of the life course.

The possibility of postponing retirement by two to three years if it meant keeping the same salary but working fewer hours is most attractive to respondents in the UK; respondents from Austria, Greece and the Czech Republic, along with women in Slovenia and men in Turkey, are the least interested in this option (Figure 16). Along with the respondents in the UK, this option is also the top preference of respondents in the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Belgium and Ireland. Respondents from all other countries prefer the trade-off between postponing retirement and an increase in their future pension.

Table 22 Preferred options when close to retirement, by country and sex (%)

	Completely stop working		Work part time before retirement		Work full time before retirement, but with less responsibility	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
All countries	33	29	32	39	24	22
Nordic countries						
Denmark	37	30	45	54	10	3
Finland	44	27	34	56	16	11
Sweden	21	23	53	59	13	12
Continental countries						
Austria	36	30	22	29	17	14
Belgium	47	45	37	43	6	4
France	41	34	29	45	12	7
Germany	39	32	33	41	17	14
Netherlands	23	20	53	61	16	10
Liberal countries						
Ireland	37	30	36	48	13	10
UK	27	33	43	49	20	8
Mediterranean countries						
Greece	37	46	32	32	26	16
Italy	37	34	34	42	15	8
Portugal	57	56	21	23	13	13
Spain	49	50	21	21	11	10
NMS						
Czech Republic	17	15	24	28	40	34
Estonia	20	16	29	41	44	37
Hungary	27	27	35	41	33	30
Latvia	11	8	27	28	48	54
Lithuania	18	18	40	36	40	42
Poland	26	19	28	33	41	41
Slovakia	18	24	14	15	56	53
Slovenia	28	30	27	35	37	33
ACC3						
Bulgaria	28	28	15	22	50	45
Romania	24	26	18	21	49	48
Turkey	29	15	16	28	52	54

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Figure 16 Possible trade-offs for postponing retirement by two to three years, by country (%)

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

The option of postponing retirement by two to three years if it meant taking a sabbatical or paid leave of absence during working life is more attractive to respondents in Finland and Denmark. Respondents in the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovakia and Bulgaria are the least interested in this option. However, among all the countries, this option appears to be considerably less interesting than the possibility of keeping the same salary but working fewer hours.

The option of postponing retirement by two to three years if it meant increasing the future pension is more appealing to respondents in Italy, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania. Respondents in Austria, the Netherlands and Belgium are the least interested in this possibility.

Along with questions regarding fewer working hours or taking a sabbatical/paid leave as possible trade-offs for postponing the age of retirement, respondents of the Eurobarometer surveys were also asked about how they would use this extra free time. The majority of the responses pointed to a desire to have more time for themselves, although the need to look after their partner, children or grandchildren came close behind. Life course effects were evident in this context. Having more time for themselves was the most preferred option of childless respondents aged 36 to 50 years, with the exception of those in southern Europe, where the youngest respondents showed the greatest interest in having more free time for themselves. Europeans with children were also more interested than others in looking after their partner, children or grandchildren as a possible use of the extra time. Other possible time uses were less significant.

In cases where respondents said they did not want to postpone retirement in exchange for any of the three aforementioned options, another question was raised, namely, why they were not interested in these possibilities. Accordingly, among those not wanting to postpone retirement, a dislike of the idea of retiring later was the main reason cited for the lack of interest in doing so. The two other reasons cited – ‘I do not need more time now or in the future’ and ‘I am not interested in increasing my future pension’ – were chosen by only 12% of respondents, respectively.

In countries such as Spain, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia and Slovenia, more than 80% of the respondents said they were not in favour of the idea of retiring later. Only in the Netherlands and Turkey did fewer than 60% of respondents express their disinterest in the idea of postponing retirement. Respondents in the oldest age group (over 50 years old) were the least enamoured by the idea of retiring later, a trend that is confirmed for most of the country groups.

Reducing their pension as a possible trade-off was only of interest to a minority of European employees. Some 22% of respondents overall favoured reducing their pension in exchange for ‘keeping the same salary but working fewer hours prior to retiring’; just 16% of respondents said they would reduce their pension in exchange for a sabbatical or paid leave of absence during their working life. Some 28% of respondents were willing to face a reduction in their pension in exchange for retiring earlier. Childless Europeans aged between 36 and 50 years appeared to be the most interested in reducing their pension in exchange for retiring earlier. The youngest respondents were the least interested in this option. In relation to the second most preferred option – ‘keeping the same salary but working fewer hours prior to retirement’ – the oldest respondents were the least attracted by this possibility. Meanwhile, the youngest respondents were the most interested in reducing their pension in exchange for a sabbatical or paid leave of absence during their working life.

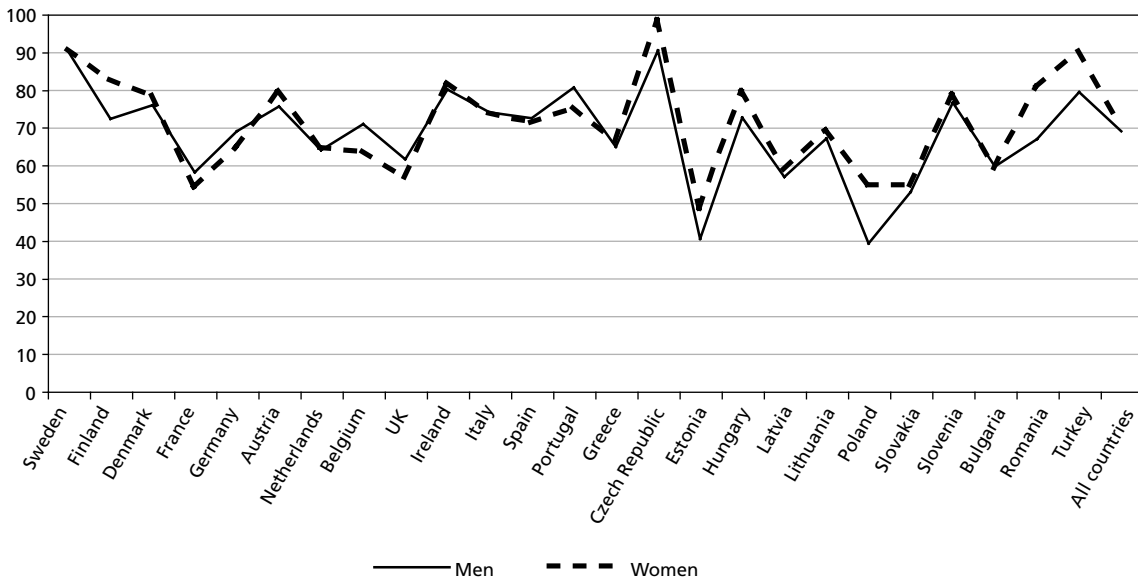
Attitudes to lifelong learning

A large proportion of respondents are interested in the possibility of ‘continuing to learn or to be trained throughout life’, with around 69% of respondents overall expressing this interest (Figure 17). Levels of interest in this option are highest in Sweden and the Czech Republic, where around 90% and 94% of respondents, respectively, are interested in this possibility. The countries with the lowest levels of interest in lifelong learning are Estonia and Poland. From a life course perspective, the youngest respondents express the highest interest in lifelong learning; the number of respondents interested in lifelong learning decreases over the life course (Figure 18).

The main reason cited by respondents for pursuing lifelong learning, regardless of the life course phase, is ‘to adapt to the rapid changes in society’ (quoted by around 52% of respondents overall). The percentage of respondents that mention this choice tends to increase as the life course progresses (Figure 18).

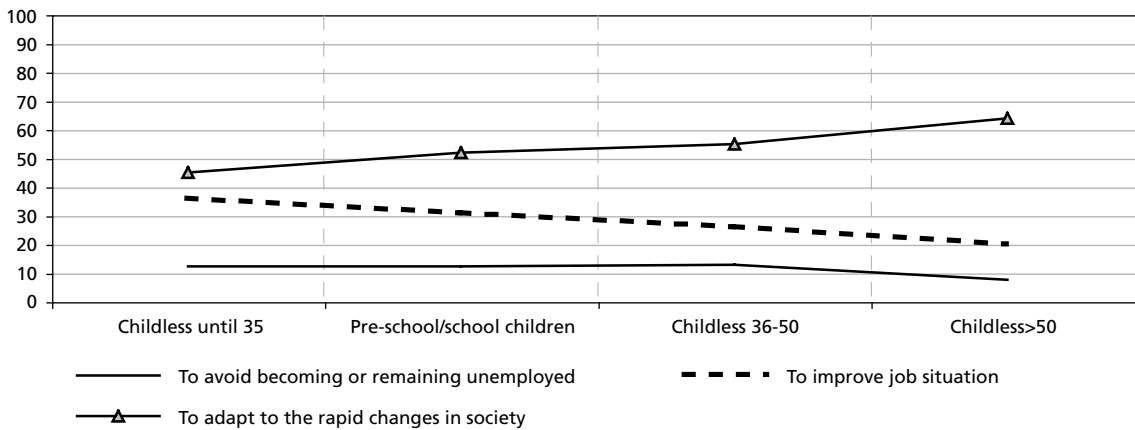
In contrast, the second most common reason – to improve the job situation – chosen by about 29% of respondents overall, tends to be cited less frequently as the life course advances (Figure 18). Thus, a greater proportion of younger employees chose this reason. Opting for lifelong learning to help avoid unemployment is only cited by around 12% of respondents overall, and life course does not seem to produce any specific effect.

Figure 17 Respondents open to lifelong learning, by country and sex (%)*



*All respondents who are not retired.
Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

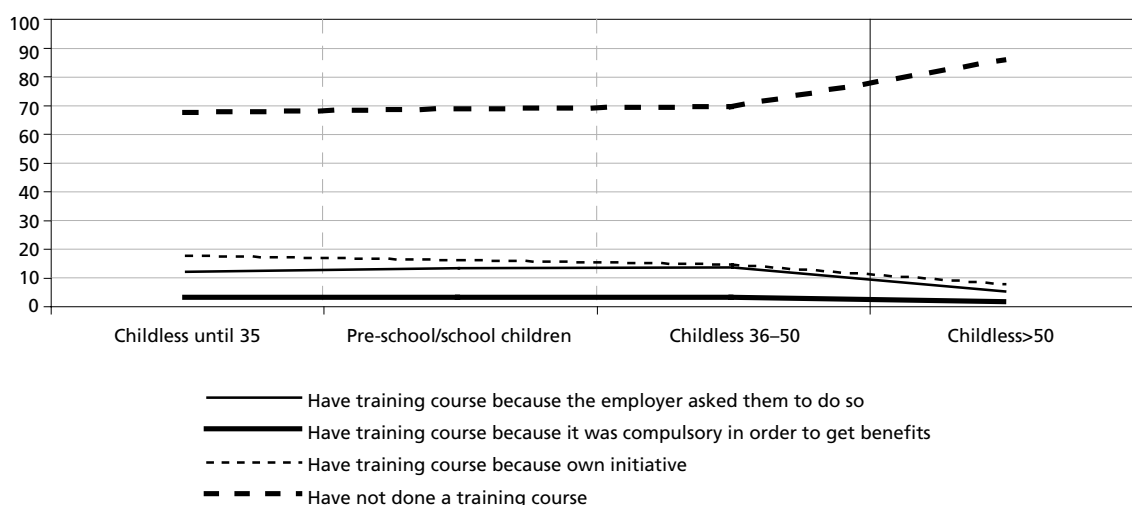
Figure 18 Main reasons for engaging in lifelong learning, by life course (%)



Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

As already seen, the great majority of respondents (around 74%) across all countries have not done a training course in the previous 12 months (Figure 19). Most of the respondents (about 13%) who completed a training course did so under their own initiative. In Portugal and Greece, the percentage of respondents who did not complete a training course in the previous 12 months reached over 90%, while in the Czech Republic and Slovenia, this figure stood at just over 50%. However, in these latter two countries, a considerably higher proportion of respondents did so because their employer asked them to, a reason that was given by only around 10% of respondents overall. In all countries, only about 2% of respondents overall indicated that the training course was compulsory for receipt of certain benefits.

Figure 19 Enrolment in training course in past 12 months, and reasons for, by life course (%)



Note: In the least chosen categories of response, only very few cases were found, as this option was not applicable for a significant number of respondents; therefore, this figure was only analysed in valid cases.

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Across all countries, a greater proportion of older employees (aged over 50 years) have not done a training course in the previous 12 months, showing the relatively youthful orientation towards this kind of initiative across Europe. In the Nordic, northern and central European countries, most of the employees who completed a training course did so under their own initiative, while in the other groups of countries, a clear hierarchy between one’s own initiative and an obligation imposed or suggested by the employer did not emerge.

In the great majority of countries, the company or organisation in which the respondents worked paid for the training course. This was the case for over 60% of respondents in Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia and for over 70% of respondents in the Czech Republic. The exceptions in this instance were Spain, where more employees paid for the training course themselves, and Romania, where slightly more training courses were paid for by the regional or local government. In the Nordic, northern and central European countries, along with Italy, employees themselves were the second biggest contributors in terms of paying for training courses. In Portugal and Greece, the national government ranked second, while in the majority of NMS and ACC3 countries, the regional and local government came in second place in this respect.

From a life course perspective, childless employees aged between 36 and 50 years are generally the main beneficiaries of training courses paid for by their companies or organisations. Those in the oldest age group (over 50 years old) had to rely more on themselves to fund training courses than the other respondents. The youngest employees in the southern European countries also had to rely more on their own resources than on those of the companies or organisations for which they work. In the NMS, regional or local government clearly play an important role in investing in the training of their workers.

Work–life balance solutions

In the Eurobarometer surveys, respondents were asked to express their opinion in relation to what kinds of leave and facilities European employees should be entitled to, to help improve their work–

life balance. This study chose to analyse some of the main topics, examining the distribution of respondents' answers, by country and sex, in relation to several possibilities for taking time off from work for different personal uses aimed at a better work–life balance. The choice was oriented towards issues that tend to have a greater impact from a life course perspective.

Clearly, a considerably high proportion of respondents agree with the necessity of taking time off for care in general (Table 23). Moreover, a greater proportion of respondents with children, particularly mothers, think that people should be able to 'take time off work to be with their partners, children or grandchildren' or 'to look after sick or elderly members of their family' and to 'have access to childcare facilities at their workplace'.

A greater proportion of the youngest respondents and those with children, particularly women, also agree that people should be able to 'take time off work to study or take courses' or 'to do voluntary work'. Conversely, this proportion appears to decrease in the later phases of the life course. Moreover, a greater share of younger Europeans believe that individuals should be able to 'take time off work for their own benefit'. Once again, this way of thinking decreases over the life course. The possibility of 'early retirement', favoured by a majority of over 70% of respondents, is welcomed more by respondents with children and by men in the oldest age group.

In short, taking time off work to meet caring responsibilities (family, sickness), for studying and training, to be entitled to early retirement and to avail of childcare facilities at the workplace are considered by European employees as being the most important solutions for a better work–life balance. The fact that these types of solutions were the most chosen options, with average levels of agreement among respondents ranging from around 60% to well over 70% (Table 23), is a possible indication that these solutions may constitute important policy demands.

In relation to who should pay for the time off work, a greater number of respondents in all of the countries – particularly respondents in the later phases of the life course – considered that the employee should support the costs of 'time taken off work to be with their partners, children or grandchildren'. There is a close match in the number of respondents who considered that the employer and the government should support these costs, with no life course effects emerging in these two respects.

The highest proportion of respondents considered that the government should support the costs of 'time taken off work to look after sick or elderly members of the family'. Slightly more respondents with children and childless people aged 36 to 50 years chose this option. In second place, respondents considered that the employee should bear these costs; the smallest proportion of respondents believed that the employer should support the costs of time taken off for such purposes.

Most Europeans (around 57%) in every stage of the life course believe that the employer should support the costs of 'time taken off work to study or take courses' (Figure 20). A slightly higher proportion of respondents in the oldest age group (over 50 years) chose this solution. The percentages of respondents who considered that either the employee or government should support these costs were closely matched, at around 18% and 19%, respectively.

Table 23 Agreement with reasons for taking time off work for personal and family use, by country and sex (%)

	To be with their partner, children or grandchildren		To look after sick or elderly members of their family		To study or take courses		To do voluntary work		For their own benefit (leisure activities, travel, arts, music, etc.)		To have access to childcare facilities at their workplace		To take early retirement	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
All countries	64	67	79	85	73	77	34	34	47	48	57	65	73	76
Nordic countries														
Denmark	64	70	89	96	80	87	29	34	48	52	48	48	71	76
Finland	73	79	75	85	84	90	38	39	53	54	30	35	91	92
Sweden	63	61	83	90	88	92	34	37	60	60	42	44	79	83
Continental countries														
Austria	61	58	81	84	60	51	40	33	40	36	65	66	61	56
Belgium	57	56	68	70	55	57	22	20	40	33	47	59	69	65
France	45	51	56	66	68	74	24	26	35	39	66	79	68	77
Germany	41	47	75	81	75	73	28	26	32	33	47	61	65	67
Netherlands	74	75	88	94	77	78	37	31	58	54	64	78	90	93
Liberal countries														
Ireland	69	77	83	90	82	81	40	40	50	44	72	85	87	88
UK	71	71	79	93	79	88	31	33	38	35	77	85	85	86
Mediterranean countries														
Greece	75	82	74	86	70	73	42	50	51	56	68	83	72	82
Italy	70	75	89	92	69	71	38	42	50	54	74	82	62	61
Portugal	51	67	86	91	65	76	44	50	30	38	81	89	72	80
Spain	62	69	71	74	68	71	31	34	49	44	79	82	79	75
NMS														
Czech Republic	73	77	90	91	73	76	46	47	52	51	49	63	83	84
Estonia	71	63	91	91	86	86	36	23	44	45	51	63	75	78
Hungary	87	92	86	93	81	90	36	39	74	80	58	66	80	88
Latvia	67	69	86	86	79	87	33	30	56	51	55	60	74	77
Lithuania	27	23	58	56	62	67	20	18	34	31	37	38	49	46
Poland	70	62	81	79	78	72	31	30	36	33	63	74	82	81
Slovakia	79	84	94	96	82	85	46	43	74	68	56	60	85	84
Slovenia	76	81	75	85	73	78	44	39	71	66	54	58	72	65
ACC3														
Bulgaria	84	84	94	95	81	80	34	36	68	73	51	64	73	73
Romania	45	47	63	65	53	63	11	19	20	26	43	60	49	60
Turkey	63	71	70	82	53	76	39	55	41	59	40	65	49	61

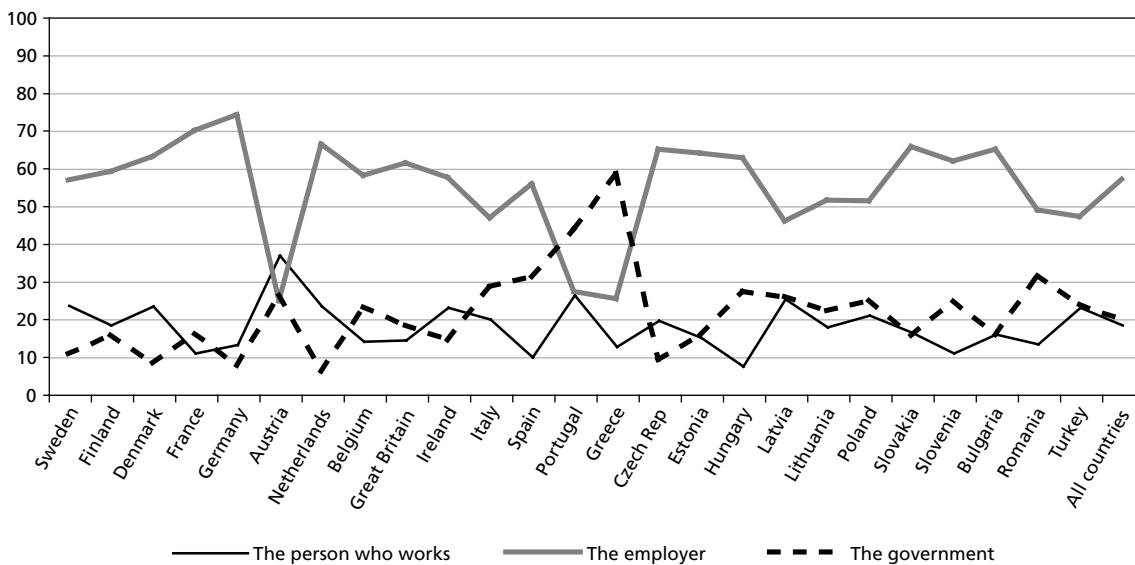
Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

In relation to time taken off work to do voluntary work, most respondents in all phases of the life course considered that the employee should meet these costs, with the exception of those in the youngest life course phase, who picked the government in first place, albeit by a small margin. The proportion of respondents who believe that the employee should support the costs of time off work to do voluntary work increases over the life course, while the number of those who chose the

government in this instance decreases. The least popular solution, whereby the employer supports the costs of time off work for these purposes, seems to be unaffected by life course.

A greater proportion of Europeans believe that the employer should support the costs of ‘childcare facilities at the workplace’. In second place is the government, which is favoured more by the youngest respondents and by those with children. In relation to who should support the costs of early retirement, the government was the most popular option among those with children and among childless people aged 36 to 50 years. In second place was the employees themselves.

Figure 20 Respondents’ views as to who should mainly pay for time taken off work to study or to take courses, by country (%)



Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Slightly fewer than 50% of respondents would not be willing to pay more taxes or contributions for having the right to leave work or to have access to other social services. In Belgium, Portugal and Poland, over 60% of respondents would be unwilling to pay additional taxes or contributions. A lower proportion of respondents said they would in fact be willing to pay such taxes or contributions, while the smallest proportion of all said they were uncertain in this respect. The Nordic countries – which have among the most fully developed welfare states – showed the highest share of respondents willing to pay more taxes or contributions. Only in Denmark and Turkey did over 50% of respondents unconditionally support the payment of more taxes or contributions for these purposes. In contrast, Germany and Italy recorded the lowest number of respondents who answered in the affirmative to this proposal. In general, some life course effects were observed. Childless respondents aged 36 to 50 years were the most unwilling to pay more taxes or contributions, while respondents with children were the keenest in this respect.

Main conclusions

In summary, the more desired options for combining work with other activities concern greater personal control over working time or the development of time saving schemes. Conversely, other

kinds of options that involve less income, special leave or early retirement are considered less important. Career breaks, teleworking or childcare facilities at the workplace are considered even less important. The impact of life course on such choices is clear for some options involving time saving schemes, with the youngest respondents favouring these options more than respondents with children or those in the oldest age group; moreover, options concerning early retirement were, not surprisingly, more favoured by the oldest respondents. Arrangements such as taking extra paid time off to look after relatives, teleworking or childcare facilities at the workplace are also, logically, more favoured by those with caring responsibilities.

The cross-country variation is not that significant when considering the options that are deemed more important, such as control over working hours or time saving schemes. In relation to certain kinds of options, differences between the countries can also be explained by other variables, for example, the availability of other types of leave to employees, their income levels, characteristics of the workplace and enterprise, the institutional background and work regulations in different countries. These features have specific implications for the availability of the different options proposed.

In terms of availability, it emerged that the options considered most important – namely, those related to personal working time control – were generally those most available, despite some small gaps. Nonetheless, marked differences were evident in some instances. In the case of options paid for by the employer, availability was low in most countries, although when available these options were very much used. With regard to the option of ‘unpaid leave’, availability prevailed over its importance, with this option being taken up much less frequently. The reverse was true in the case of ‘teleworking’: although this option was not considered as important, and was even less available, it was one of the most used options when available.

As regards satisfaction in relation to several domains of work–life balance, the respondents tended to express relatively high levels of satisfaction. However, as outlined, the answers to questions related to satisfaction, for methodological reasons, have to be analysed bearing in mind the relative differences. These differences showed that satisfaction with several life domains related to time spent in different activities revealed wide cross-national differences, persistent gender gaps and some variations over the life course. Some of these results even seemed to illustrate, through the respondents’ opinions, findings that had been underlined in time use analysis. These include the work overload experienced by working women, and particularly by mothers and fathers of young children, in the rush hour of life.

Nevertheless, the existence of wide country differences in relation to satisfaction does not preclude the identification of certain trends. For example, higher levels of satisfaction are especially evident in the Nordic countries as well as in some northern and central European countries. In these countries, the respondents are most satisfied with their jobs in general as well as with their own free time, financial situation, hours spent on paid and unpaid work, on training, studies and courses and with the division of household tasks. In contrast, employees in the ACC3 appear to be the least satisfied in the various spheres. The ‘satisfaction cluster’ concerning the dimensions addressed in this analysis, constituted by the Nordic countries in particular, may also signal the effectiveness of welfare state policies in these countries in relation to work–life balance issues.

In summarising the findings regarding relations between work, time and income, it could be concluded that, from a life course perspective, young people seem more eager to exchange working time for money; in other words, in terms of the possible implementation of time saving accounts, they seem more open to the idea of exchanging time for money in this period of their lives. Moreover, they appear to be more open than their parents or older people to the idea of saving time now to 'spend' it in the future. However, the difficulties faced in achieving a reduction in working time in most countries due to financial constraints should also be emphasised at this point. This was particularly the case for people in the 'rush hour of life' in the majority of countries. The hypothesis outlined at the beginning, suggesting that working parents would be more interested in reducing their working time, was partially confirmed, as this group of workers expressed the desire to reduce their working time much more than the others. Nonetheless, they also indicated the impossibility of doing so due to financial reasons.

The strong attachment to paid work as a form of social identity among men and women, including fathers and mothers, does not contradict the relevance of work as a source of income – particularly in countries with a low GDP, where a source of income is most needed. However, the findings also clearly show that linking mothers' paid work to financial needs only does not paint a complete picture: paid work may also play, as concluded here, an essential role in working mothers' self-assertion.

The analysis also identified a certain reluctance in relation to part-time jobs; this finding correlates with other research revealing that part-time work can be perceived by employees as being associated with obstacles, penalties and risks related to social protection, job security or career problems (Bielensky et al, 2002; Hildebrandt, 2006).

In relation to retirement, most Europeans wish to retire before the age of 60 years, which is generally well below the age at which they actually expect to retire. The gap between the age at which respondents wish to and expect to retire is especially high among those in the youngest age group. While many of the oldest respondents, on average, expect to retire at around 63 years of age and would like to retire at about 59 years of age, the youngest respondents expect to retire, on average, a little below the age of 65 years and would like to retire at just over 55 years. These discrepancies are much wider in the NMS and ACC3 than in the Nordic countries. Working part time before retirement is one of the most popular options for ensuring a smoother transition from the labour market to retirement.

When confronted with three possibilities as a trade-off for postponing retirement by two to three years, the most preferred exchange is for an increase in respondents' future pension. Postponing retirement and keeping the same salary but reducing working hours is the preferred option of almost half of the respondents, while postponing retirement in exchange for a sabbatical or paid leave is the preferred option of around a third of respondents. The popularity of all three options decreases gradually towards the later stages of the life course.

In relation to lifelong learning, many of the respondents wished 'to continue to learn or be trained throughout life'. The main reason for pursuing lifelong learning, regardless of the life course phase, is the proactive choice 'to adapt to the rapid changes in society'. However, only a small proportion of respondents across all countries had recently been involved in training or lifelong learning in the previous 12 months; an even smaller proportion of the older respondents indicated that this was the

case. In relation to employees who had completed a training course, most of those in the Nordic, northern and central European countries had done so under their own initiative; in the other country groups, there was no clear hierarchy between employees' own initiative and an obligation imposed or suggested by the employer. In a significant majority of countries, the company or organisation for which the respondents worked had paid for the training course.

As regards policy demands, this part of the study concluded that taking time off work to meet caring responsibilities (family, sickness), or for studying or training, entitlement to early retirement, or access to childcare facilities at the workplace were considered by the respondents as fair entitlements for a more favourable work–life balance. The fact that these types of solutions were chosen by between 60% and well over 70% of respondents suggests that they may constitute important policy demands.

Based on comparative survey evidence, the first aim of this report was to investigate cross-national differences in time use over the life course against the background of differences between the countries in the institutional arrangements and socioeconomic conditions that shape individuals' life courses and transition patterns. Secondly, it looked at the issue of lifelong learning and assessed country differences in the level and patterns of stratification in training participation. Thirdly, apart from the analysis of actual time use, the study investigated individuals' time use options and preferences for personal time allocations from a life course perspective, as well as looking at how far actual time use corresponds with such options and preferences. Fourthly, the report investigated individuals' needs regarding measures that may help to reconcile various time-demanding commitments, such as flexible working hours, phased retirement regimes or career breaks, also examining how far such needs correspond with the availability of measures in the different countries. Satisfaction with existing time use arrangements and some trade-offs for the future are also analysed and related to different life course stages and to gender in the various countries. Before this study concludes by drawing a number of policy recommendations based on its findings, the following section provides a brief overview of the main findings of the analysis.

Time use and preferences over the life course

Entrance phase

Following the rapid educational expansion of recent decades, the period of transition from school to work has become more prolonged in some, but not necessarily all, countries. In the Nordic countries in particular, a comparatively high share of young people aged up to 35 years old are in education. In these countries, therefore, the exit from education and the full labour market integration of young people tends to occur quite late. The initial education phase also tends to be relatively long in continental Europe. However, in some of these countries, such as Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria, which operate (dual) systems of occupationally specific training at secondary level, it is quite common for students to combine their studies with part-time work. Hence, part-time labour market entry occurs at a relatively early age and is often combined with further training. For this reason, and because of low youth unemployment levels, in northern and continental Europe (with the exceptions of France, Belgium and Finland, where youth unemployment is comparatively high), youth employment rates tend to be high and the transition from school to work relatively smooth.

In contrast, in some Mediterranean and in most post-socialist countries, the exit from initial education takes place rather early. However, the transition from school to work is not necessarily quicker than in northern Europe, due to the fact that youth unemployment tends to be a major problem. Hence, the transition from school to work in these countries often involves a high level of economic risk and uncertainty. In the liberal countries – Ireland and the UK – where youth employment rates tend to be high and the problem of youth unemployment is less severe, the transition from school to work also tends to be difficult, with many of the lesser skilled job entrants having problems entering the primary labour market; this can result, for instance, in excessive job hopping and stop-gap jobs in the early years (see, for example, Mayer, 2004).

Against this background, it is not generally possible to determine whether a strong work involvement by the young generation is a negative or positive thing. A weak paid work involvement of those aged up to 35 years may be indicative of high youth unemployment levels, which is a highly problematic

issue in Spain, Poland and Bulgaria, for example. On the other hand, it may signal a long duration of initial education, as seen, for instance, in the Nordic countries, which in principle is in accord with EU policy aimed at fostering education in order to create a knowledge-based and highly competitive economy. Conversely, a strong paid work involvement by young people cannot in itself simply be regarded as a positive feature: while it may be indicative of low youth unemployment, it may also reflect low enrolment rates in higher education, as observed, for example, in Austria, the UK and Portugal.

The EU supports national efforts aimed at upgrading people's skills. However, it should be noted that an increase in the duration of initial education may be at odds with the goal of raising overall employment rates, which requires more entries into the labour market; this necessitates not only later exit from the labour market, but also earlier entry. This raises the question: is it more important to increase employment rates or should young people be encouraged to stay in education for longer, and if so, is it desirable that they accumulate work experience during their studies? As part of the aim of tackling youth unemployment, fostering young people's employability by providing them with the necessary qualifications for a successful labour market entry is clearly crucial. Moreover, it seems that the countries in which dual systems of education and training are evident are more successful not only in avoiding youth unemployment, but also in ensuring adequate employment for labour market entrants. In contrast, the general education system found in the UK, although successful in keeping youth unemployment low, is markedly less successful in providing for a smooth transition from school to work.

In countries where the transition from school to work is most difficult due to a lack of employment opportunities, the transition from the parental home to setting up one's own home tends to be postponed, as does the formation of the first stable union and entering parenthood. This trend mainly concerns the southern European countries, along with some of the central and eastern European countries. In contrast, in the Nordic countries, a pattern of an early transition from the parental home to one's own home, an early timing of first union formation and comparatively high fertility rates are observed (Oinenan, 2004; Saraceno and Olagnero, 2004). The situation in eastern Europe is more mixed, however, and cannot be generalised across countries.

In terms of options and preferences, it could be surmised that young employees without care responsibilities feel that they are more lacking in money rather than time. In fact, they most commonly choose options that involve using more or less time at work if needed, saving time and using it in the future, being able to use extra paid time for study, taking a sabbatical or career break, and also options that involve receiving more money instead of holidays. These choices seem quite coherent with those concerning trade-offs related to personal time allocation. Clearly, it was the youngest respondents with no care responsibilities who more frequently chose the options involving more working hours and in turn more money, while they rejected working time reductions and less pay. Accordingly, the youngest respondents are also the least satisfied with their financial situation.

Although only about 20% of all Europeans plan to reduce their working time, the youngest respondents are the least prepared to do so. Nonetheless, in terms of personal time allocation, the younger respondents do not view part-time solutions as a lack of commitment and they are more willing to take career breaks and sabbatical leave for studying and training.

In terms of life course policies, it is interesting to note that the greatest discrepancy between the expected retirement age (64.3 years) and preferred retirement age (56.1 years) occurs among the youngest respondents. This may be related to more realistic expectations reflecting the current debates on the sustainability of social security systems in Europe, or an effect of adapting expectations to objective probabilities. Flexible retirement, particularly working part time before retirement, is also among the solutions most preferred by the youngest respondents. Young people are also much more receptive than those in the other life course stages to the idea of postponing their retirement age for two to three years, regardless of the trade-offs: for example, keeping the same salary but working fewer hours before retirement, taking a sabbatical/paid leave of absence during working life or increasing their future pension.

Of course, it is difficult to determine if this is a life course effect or an age effect. Reducing the amount of pension benefits in exchange for retiring two to three years earlier is not an attractive solution for the youngest Europeans. On the contrary, they are most interested in exchanging a reduction in pension benefits for a sabbatical or paid leave of absence during working life. Even if this is not a solution chosen by many Europeans (only around 20%), who dislike the idea of retiring late, this result may point the way for future life course policies.

Europeans' willingness to engage in lifelong is very high in all of the life course stages, ranging from between 70% and 90% of respondents in a large number of countries. Not surprisingly, acceptance of this idea is much higher among the youngest respondents who have no care responsibilities. This attitude can be attributed to reasons related to improving their job situation or adapting to rapid changes in society. Nonetheless, it does not reflect the realities of daily life. In fact, most Europeans – ranging from between 60% and 90% of respondents in the majority of countries – had not done a training course over the past year, even if the percentage for the youngest respondents with no care responsibilities was somewhat higher than for those in the other life course groups. Younger Europeans also think that they should be entitled to take time off work to study or take courses and that the employer should support these costs. Once again, this is an important consideration for policymakers.

'Rush hour of life'

Between the ages of 35 and 50 years, most people enter the parenting phase, hence the term 'rush hour of life'. This phase is characterised by problems related to the management of the conflicting demands of work and family life – juggling between furthering one's career, investing in lifelong learning and taking care of children and other dependants such as elderly relatives. Therefore, this period of life is characterised by a workload that is much higher than that of those in the young childless state or of those in the empty nest phase when children have already left home. However, in terms of the total workload borne by fathers and mothers, large country differences emerge.

In the Nordic countries, paid working hours tend to be moderate for both men and women. Hence, comparably small gender disparities in paid work involvement are evident. In continental Europe, the number of full-time working hours also tends to be moderate; however, in contrast with the Nordic countries, higher rates of female part-time employment are observed, in particular of women working short part-time hours. With the notable exception of Portugal, the Mediterranean countries exhibit a low employment rate among the core working age group, particularly among women; however, when women are in employment, they tend to work full time. In the UK, but also in some of the

NMS countries such as Slovenia and the Czech Republic, high employment rates are observed, along with a high incidence of excessive working hours. In the UK, unemployment is low and large gender disparities in paid work involvement are found, with a prevalence of short and marginal female part-time work. In most of the post-socialist countries, unemployment represents a major problem (although unemployment tends to be lower in Slovenia, Hungary and the Czech Republic), while part-time work is of little relevance. Finally, the ACC3 countries are characterised by a low overall employment rate. In Bulgaria and Turkey, this is largely due to very high rates of unemployment.

In the analysis of time spent on paid work, the study took account of the fact that female, but also male, participation rates varied cross-nationally. It devised an average measure of paid work involvement, averaging the weekly hours spent in paid work over the entire population (including those working zero hours). Investigating the average number of weekly hours of paid work among women, the analysis uncovered different life course models of female labour market involvement. The ‘continuous model’ of women’s paid work involvement is characterised by a high and continuous participation over the life course, involving long part-time or full-time hours. Countries that fall into this category include Denmark, Sweden and Portugal, where a high employment rate among mothers is evident, as well as Slovenia and Latvia, where female participation rates are somewhat lower but where employed mothers tend to work full time. Two further countries that show a continuous model of women’s paid work involvement are France and Belgium. However, although maternal labour market participation in these two countries is continuous, it is still on a somewhat lower level than that of the aforementioned countries. Countries in which a continuous pattern of high female work involvement is found differ considerably with respect to institutional support for maternal employment. While in Sweden, Slovenia, Denmark, and to a somewhat lesser extent in France and Belgium, childcare facilities are extensive, this is much less the case in Portugal and Latvia.

In the ‘traditional model’, women severely reduce their working hours once they have children and tend not to increase their working hours when their children start going to school. However, this study identified three variants of the ‘traditional model’: the ‘exit model’ found in Turkey, where most mothers are out of the labour force; the ‘exit or part-time model’ found in west Germany, Ireland and the Netherlands; and the ‘exit or full-time model’ model found in Italy, Spain, Greece and Poland.

In the ‘transitional model’ of women’s paid work involvement, women severely reduce their working hours when they have pre-school age children, but then increase their work involvement again once their children start going to school. A further distinction can be made between two variants of the transitional model. In the first variant, women strongly increase their paid working hours when children reach school age, for example as observed in Finland, Estonia, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia. In the second variant, this increase in hours is less pronounced, as evident for instance in Austria, the UK, east Germany, Hungary and Romania.

Several reasons could help to explain why, in some countries, motherhood does not imply giving up paid work, while in others it seems impossible to reconcile motherhood with paid work. Diverse factors like the type of welfare state and gender regimes, the existence of family-friendly and women-friendly policies, such as universal and affordable childcare facilities, and cultural reasons have been the most frequently cited reasons by different researchers (Sainsbury, 1996; Pfau-Effinger, 1999; Esping-Anderson, 2002; Brannen, Moss and Mooney, 2004; Gornick and Meyers, 2003; Crompton,

2006). This is precisely why it is very difficult to accept the idea that women's and particularly mothers' paid work is mainly a matter of 'choice' (Hakim, 2000). As mentioned, agency preferences and options are made against specific sets of constraints like whether they can find adequate jobs (labour supply, risk of unemployment, lack of part-time opportunities) or can access care facilities. Supporting mothers' employment entails a lot of advantages for individuals, but also for the socioeconomic development of welfare states and is thus a major aim of life course policies. Positive effects of increased female employment rates involve a more favourable income situation for women, hence increased independence from a male provider, and the mitigation of the problem of child poverty and of the sustainability of costly welfare states in ageing societies.

The time spent on paid work by men over the life course follows a largely similar pattern in all of the countries under consideration. Men increase their number of paid working hours when they reach fatherhood, although the level of paid work involvement varies considerably across countries. The longest working hours among fathers are observed in southern Europe, Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Slovakia and Turkey. Conversely, the shortest hours are worked by fathers in the Nordic countries, France and the Netherlands. This aligns with the fact that working hours in these countries are strongly regulated and that the standard working week is set at a comparatively low level. In Bulgaria, due to high unemployment levels, the average paid work involvement of fathers is also quite low. Overall, therefore, fathers tend to work a comparatively short number of hours in the Nordic and in some continental European countries (but not in Austria), while they tend to work a comparatively long number of hours in southern and eastern Europe (with the exception of Bulgaria due to high unemployment levels).

In some countries, the gender gap in time use is comparatively small (especially in the Nordic and continental countries), whereas it is more marked in others; this is best demonstrated by looking at the total workload (paid and unpaid work) of women and men. In Poland, Romania, Italy and Spain, both working mothers and fathers tend to have a high total workload. Conversely, in France, Portugal, Germany, Austria, Finland and the Netherlands, the total workload of working parents tends to be significantly lower. Overall, it can be said that working parents tend to have the highest total workload in many post-socialist countries and southern Europe, while in continental Europe the total workload borne by working parents is significantly lower. An important exception in this context is Portugal, which does not fit the pattern of other southern European countries.

Individuals' options and preferences clearly show, as pointed out, that the rush hour of life phase raises problems of time use compatibility. The importance of choices that imply more control of time use – working more or fewer hours if needed – increases even more among men and women with children. In this group, other options generally considered as being less important for working time arrangements – teleworking, taking extra time off to look after relatives, childcare facilities at the workplace, taking unpaid leave – are often chosen, although not as frequently as options allowing greater control over working time. People with children also cite, more than others in the different life course stages, the availability of some arrangements. Men in general, and women with pre-school or school children, chose options such as 'working more or less hours if needed' more frequently.

Levels of satisfaction are an indirect, but nonetheless clear, sign of the 'time squeeze' effect experienced in the 'rush hour of life' phase, and there is evidence of the influence of gender in this context. Respondents with children are the least satisfied with time spent with family and friends and with their own level of free time. The gender gap within this group is also very pronounced. Women

with children are the least satisfied with the number of hours they have to spend on household tasks and with the division of household tasks. Although this gap is largely evident in all countries, it is much wider in the southern European states. School opening hours and the time it takes to bring children to and from school are the issues that have a significant impact on the free time of people with pre-school or school children. In the same group, working fewer hours per day/week is also the main choice when opting to reduce working time.

It is also interesting to observe that the majority of women, more so than men in many countries, indicate that they would continue to work even if they did not need the money; this is a clear indicator that work is also a form of social identity for women. Reducing working hours is something that most fathers would like to do but find impossible due to financial reasons. This finding is coherent with the aforementioned results, which show that fathers spend many hours in paid work. At the same time, men in this group more often consider that part-time work can be risky for their career, showing a lack of commitment. Conversely, women with children indicate more often than men that part-time work is possible in their present job. These answers seem to correlate very well with the aforementioned analysis of gender labour market differences.

In the rush hour of life, certain leave entitlements – such as taking time off work to be with partners, children or grandchildren, taking time off work to look after sick or elderly members of the family, or even having access to childcare facilities at the workplace, or taking early retirement – are considered far more important than in the other life course phases. Country differences are also apparent in this context.

Late phase

In recent decades, early retirement has become a more widespread phenomenon. However, vast country differences are evident in this respect. Poor performers in terms of the employment rate of older employees are Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, France, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia, where employment rates of older workers stand at 40% or lower. In contrast, Sweden, Ireland, Portugal, Denmark and the UK record employment rates of 60% or more among older employees. This is mainly due to differences in the extent of incentives for early exit inherent in the countries' institutional set-up and policy framework. However, early exit from the labour market is not necessarily a matter of choice, as in many countries older workers face a high risk of becoming unemployed. Unemployment among older workers is particularly high in some eastern European countries (Bulgaria, Slovakia and Poland) and in east Germany, Greece (among men), Spain and Finland. Maintaining a high average number of hours in paid work among those aged 50 years and over is generally desired, ensuring that the active employment phase is longer and that unemployment is less of a problem.

In relation to older people's options and preferences, if the youngest respondents want more money and are willing to use their time more intensively, the opposite applies to individuals aged over 50 years who have no care responsibilities: people in this age group generally do not wish to exchange longer working time for more money, preferring instead to have more time for themselves and complaining less about a shortage of money. They also tend to reject proposals related to postponing retirement and generally wish to stop working completely after leaving the labour market. Moreover, the expected and desired retirement ages cited by respondents in this age group are closer. Not surprisingly, satisfaction with health is less than in the other life course stages.

Identifying national 'life course regimes'

Table 24 presents a summary of the most central life course transitions in the different countries, defined according to five country clusters that are closely aligned with the different welfare state regimes in western Europe and which include a further category for eastern and central European countries. As can be seen, aggregating countries in this way does not result in a straightforward categorisation, allowing for the development of causal hypotheses about the life course outcomes of different institutional contexts. Hence, it should be seen as a broad overview, keeping in mind that life course outcomes are in effect the result of national specificities.

As has frequently been pointed out, countries allocated to the same regime types tend to differ substantially in terms of labour market conditions (for example, lower unemployment in Portugal than in the other southern European countries), educational systems (dual education and training systems in Austria, Germany and the Netherlands, but a more generalised education system in France), state support for maternal employment (for instance, a stronger support system in France and Belgium than in Germany or the Netherlands), the pension system (fewer incentives for early exit in the Netherlands than in most other continental European countries) and so forth.

Therefore, developing a typology of institutional systems capable of explaining country differences in life course patterns seems virtually impossible, particularly when looking at the whole life course rather than at specific transitions between different life stages (Mayer, 2004). The life course consists of a series of distinct phases and transitions, each of which is shaped by a specific set of interplaying institutional structures and which, due to the varieties of institutional structures and the way in which they are interrelated, may require an explanation that is eventually country specific. Given the great diversity of institutional structures and life course outcomes within regime types, it seems more appropriate to conduct life course analyses and to describe the major institutional factors that can be assumed to shape life trajectories on a nation-by-nation basis. However, such a task is virtually impossible in this context, where the aim is to provide a more coherent picture for an enlarged EU.

Through its findings, this study provides an overview of the major problems being faced by different countries, such as youth unemployment, low female employment and early exit from the labour market. Hence, it provides a background analysis for ensuing studies, which may explore in greater detail where national problems originate among a select set of countries. As the findings show, the Nordic countries exhibit patterns of life course transitions that are favourable in relation to the goal of high continuous employment over the life course – in other words, early entry into the labour market of well-trained young entrants, continuous high female participation coupled with relatively high fertility rates, and late exit from the labour market.

In contrast, in the Mediterranean countries, a pattern of a late and difficult transition from school to work emerges, along with a common pattern of withdrawal from the labour market on reaching motherhood and an early exit from the labour market, particularly in Italy. Furthermore, the study was able to compare life courses in northern, western and Mediterranean Europe, as well as in the NMS and ACC3. In the latter two country groups, a very mixed pattern emerges. In some, but not all, of these countries, a severe problem of unemployment is observed among all age groups; in some countries, a continuous pattern of female employment emerges, while in others there is a complete and permanent withdrawal from the labour market on reaching motherhood. Moreover, an early exit pattern from the labour market can be observed in some of the countries, while in others the

employment rates of older workers are at a higher level than those found in many western European countries. Hence, the present study is a good illustration of the level of variety that exists across Europe in terms of time use patterns over the life course. Ways in which national life course variation reflects national differences in the institutional set-up represents a highly interesting area for future research.

Table 24 Life course transitions in Europe, by country group

	Nordic countries	Continental countries	Liberal countries	Mediterranean countries	NMS and ACC3
Entrance phase					
Leaving home*	Early	Early (AT, DE, FR) Medium (BE, NL)	Early	Late	Early (LT, SI) Late (PO, HU, CZ, LV)
Leaving school/training	Late	Late (stratified)	Medium	Early (stratified)	Early (BG, RO) Late (PO, SI)
Labour market entry	Early (but part-time, i.e. combination of school/ training with employment)	Medium Combination of studies with employment in DE, AT & NL, smooth transition to employment except in FR & BE due to unemployment	Early Difficult transition to employment (low unemployment but often stop-gap jobs for low-skilled entrants)	Late Problem of youth unemployment especially in Italy, Spain and Greece, but less so in Portugal	Mixed Generally, a problem of youth unemployment, especially in PL and BG, in the Baltic countries and Slovakia
Youth employment	High (DK, SE) Medium (FI)	High (AT, NL) Medium (DE) Low (FR, BE)	High	Medium (PT, ES) Low (EL, IT)	Medium (CZ, SI, RO, TK) Low (all other countries)
'Rush hour of life'					
Female labour market participation	High continuous (SE, DK) High transitional (FI)	Moderate continuous (FR, BE) Low traditional (WG, NL) Moderate transitional (AT, EG)	Low traditional (IE) Moderate transitional (UK)	High continuous (PT) Moderate traditional (full-time or exit): IT, ES, EL	High continuous (SI, LV) High transitional (EE, LT, SK, CZ, BG) Moderate transitional (HU, RO) Moderate traditional (PL)
Fertility rates	Medium	Low (AT, DE) Medium (FR, BE, NL)	Medium	Low (IT, EL, ES) Medium (PT)	Very low (CZ, LT, LV, SI) Low (EE, HU, PL, SK, BG, RO) High (TK)
Late phase					
Retirement	Late	Early Medium (NL)	Late	Medium (EL, PT, ES) Early (IT)	Early (HU, PL, SK, SI, BU, RO, TK) Medium (CZ, EE, LT, LV)

This classification takes inspiration from Mayer (2004) but is adapted to include other life course phases, indicators and country clusters.

*Source: Billari et al, (2001).

Lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is an issue of major importance in life course policy. Access to ongoing training increases the employability of citizens and is therefore vital for Europe in maintaining its commitment to becoming the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world. The issue of lifelong learning plays a key role in developing a coordinated employment strategy. Empirical evidence shows that there are vast country differences in terms of the incidence of training. While the proportion of employees who engage in further learning activities, such as attending courses or participating in training, is quite high in the Nordic countries, Germany and Austria, as well as in Estonia and the Czech Republic, training incidence tends to be particularly low in Bulgaria and Portugal. However, the results also suggest that in countries where training incidence tends to be low, people who train tend to spend more time on such activities, possibly rendering such training activities more effective. Conversely, data from the analysis of preferences showed that the need for lifelong learning is well realised by the majority of employees in all the stages of the life course and grounded in a strong sense of the necessity to be able to adapt to rapid changes.

One of the major concerns for life course policy is the danger that if participation in and access to training is stratified, with training participation being concentrated on the younger and/or more educated employees, then the knowledge-based society threatens to bring about even greater inequalities in education. When looking at how training is stratified according to age, the study found that training strongly declines with age in some countries – for example, in Germany (west), Estonia, Spain, Latvia and Greece. However, in other countries, such as Austria and the Netherlands, this did not appear to be the case. In evaluating national patterns of training provision across age groups in the light of life course policy, the most favourable patterns were found in Finland, east Germany, Romania, Austria, the Netherlands and Italy, where training provision tends to be comparatively high with little age discrimination discernible. A relatively high level of training provision for those of core working age was also found in west Germany, Estonia, Spain, Latvia, Greece, Denmark, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Ireland and Slovakia. However, these countries also showed a high level of age discrimination. Meanwhile, Turkey, Bulgaria, Portugal and Belgium stand out as the countries where training provision generally tends to be quite low, irrespective of employees' age.

When looking at how training is stratified according to educational levels, it emerges that, in most countries, those who are already well educated are more likely to train than those who are less qualified. This is particularly evident in the case of Slovakia, Romania, Portugal and Poland. In these countries, therefore, existing inequalities may be further compounded by a highly stratified system of training participation. In contrast, education and training participation are loosely, if at all, related in Finland, Denmark, Sweden and the UK. From a gender perspective, no common pattern emerges in this context; nonetheless, in the majority of countries, women are more likely to participate in training, although the opposite is true in the Netherlands, Greece and Slovakia.

Policy recommendations

Underlying the increased interest of EU policymakers in the promotion of new policies with a life course orientation are the aims of the Lisbon Strategy and the desire to achieve the employment targets set for 2010. Accordingly, policymakers aim to develop policies that will help and encourage people to spend more time in employment – namely, by entering the labour market earlier, retiring later and having fewer employment discontinuities across the life course. The sustainability of future

welfare states is dependent on the success of policies aimed at increasing the labour market participation of working age people. However, there is also a need for an integrated life course policy rather than ‘simple’ activation policies.

Life course-oriented policy is concerned with enhancing flexibility in time use, allowing individuals to save and spend their ‘working life time’ and to distribute it over the course of their lives as they so wish. However, despite increasing efforts to develop strategies for an innovative reorganisation of working time over the life course in Europe, an integrated approach to effective life course policy – one that involves different policy areas and which views the life course as a whole, rather than focusing solely on important sub-issues such as youth unemployment, female labour market participation, or early exit from the labour market – has not yet been established.

Furthermore, views vary across countries on what constitutes a successful life course policy. In Sweden, state intervention plays a huge role in the aim to provide employees with greater flexibility and choice in their life trajectories. In liberal regimes, there is a traditional reliance on market forces for regulatory purposes and thus a widespread reluctance to actively shape the institutional conditions that may in turn shape life courses. As outlined by Fagan et al (2006), UK policy maintains a narrow focus on helping parents of pre-school children to balance work and care responsibilities. In contrast to Germany and the Netherlands, other employees have no individual right to request flexible work arrangements. Hence, life course policy is largely confined to the work–family agenda, while virtually no efforts have been made to tackle the problems created by the notorious ‘long-hours’ culture evident in the UK.

As is now well established in existing literature, this culture of long hours evident in the UK can have detrimental effects on family relationships, health and well-being. Thus, this study is tempted to follow Fagan and her colleagues by arguing for the desirability of a strong regulatory framework which combines the promotion of flexibility with regulatory limits designed to tackle the long-hours culture. As it is mainly men who tend to work excessive hours, while maternal employment is largely confined to poor-quality part-time jobs, legal limits on working hours would also help to attain a more equal distribution of work and career opportunities among the sexes.

Furthermore, UK policies do not extend to areas such as lifelong learning, as is the case in Germany, Sweden and the Netherlands. Other possibilities that are not included in UK policy are the use of working time accounts or working time flexibility to support phased retirement or lifelong learning, by statute or collective agreements. In contrast, other European countries that have placed a stronger emphasis on regulation have been more successful in creating greater diversity in working time patterns and in choice across the life cycle. In addition, the Nordic countries have created a more equal redistribution of hours between male and female employees, a fact that has been associated with the clear effect of social policies directed at the compatibility of paid work and parenthood and at greater equality between men and women.

In fact, several studies converge in considering the success of those policies that have produced what has been referred to as a ‘societal effect’ (Gallie, 2003). In this study, the findings once more point to the Scandinavian countries as those in which satisfaction with life, jobs and hours spent on paid work are among the highest and where ways of combining paid and unpaid work are most positively evaluated. The study also concludes that there is a high level of attachment to paid work

among women, as well as a will to combine work with family life, contradicting the old stereotypes about women's wishes and their social identity. All of these findings have led to the recommendation of life course policies that allow for a better redistribution of time and income more evenly over the life course, along with a more favourable work–life balance (Kapitány et al, 2005). With this aim, life course policy needs to take account of people's preferences, but also of their specific constraints, for a more even distribution of time spent on paid and unpaid work and on training over the whole life span.

As the analysis clearly shows, most employees would prefer more flexible working time options for a better work–study, work–care and work–retirement balance. Thus, to ensure their success, the aims of life course policy should give individuals the right and opportunity to choose between long-term adaptations of working hours (reduction or increase) or the use of lifetime saving accounts (having the same function but for a shorter period of time) or of lifelong training schemes and flexible retirement schemes. Employees should thus be able to distribute their paid and unpaid work, as well as their leisure time, over their lifetime and to transfer financial resources from the earlier or later working phases to the 'rush hour of life' so that more income and time in the form of leisure, care or training can thus be spent if preferred or needed (Groot and Breedveld, 2004). Nevertheless, it should not be forgotten that some of these work–life arrangements presuppose enduring relationships between employers and employees, which is not necessarily the case in several segments of the labour market. If this is not taken into account, some of these solutions will only work in restricted sectors and will fail in their main aims.

At the same time, policymakers seek to tackle problems related to the shrinking and ageing of the working age population by motivating women to spend more time in employment. In this context, it has been increasingly acknowledged that an increase in women's employment rates is conditional not only on the improvement of childcare provision, but also on the implementation of reforms related to the gender division of both paid and unpaid work. Against this background, the main challenges of future welfare states relate to a new 'gender contract' as well as a new 'generation contract' (Esping-Andersen, 2002b). Finally, economic trends increasingly require employees to constantly upgrade their skills in order to maintain their employability. Providing opportunities for flexible working, which in turn promotes lifelong learning and skills development, therefore represents another area where working time policy could have an important impact.

A new 'gender contract'

In order to reduce the time pressures experienced in the 'rush hour of life', facilities such as flexible leave schemes (leave to care for children, sick or elderly relatives), flexible working hours (school-day adjusted working hours, part-time work, flexi-time), flexible working arrangements (such as teleworking), support for childcare and eldercare should be made available to all employees. Currently, however, it is largely women who take advantage of these options, which often means that they are perceived as being less committed to their career. Hence, there is still a gender 'signal' of women who deviate from the standard working biography and thus invoke negative short-term and long-term consequences, for example in relation to career prospects, earnings, advancement, social security claims and pensions. When taking leave is as common for men, it will not signal anything about career commitment, as in the case of Sweden (Bovenberg, 2005). Although Scandinavian, Nordic countries represent a benchmark model for how to resolve the incompatibility between work and private life: '...the Nordic model appears less persuasive if we simultaneously aim for the more

ambitious goal of gender equality ... the key issue of gender equality (like any inequality) lies in life course dynamics' (Esping-Andersen, 2002b, p. 87). Moreover, '...we must conclude that true gender equality will not come about unless, somehow, men can be made to embrace a more feminine life course' (Esping-Andersen, 2002b, p. 95).

Hence, work–life balance goes beyond childcare facilities and parental leave during the family phase and involves the entire life course. There is also a need for policies aimed at both men and women, including mothers and also, specifically, fathers (Brannen, Moss and Mooney, 2004). In fact, this seems to be the only way to counteract the perverse effects such as those of gender segregation in the labour market.

All trends point to the increased importance of human capital as the key to achieving personal fulfilment and to addressing societal challenges in Europe: namely, the ageing population, fierce international competition and a lack of innovation. At the same time, as there is more demand for female human capital, this reduces the specialisation in home production and increases reconciliation. As female employment rates rise sharply with educational levels and men's contribution to the unpaid work sphere (Gershuny and Sullivan, 2003), human capital will constitute the key to fostering overall employment (Bovenberg, 2005).

A new 'generation contract'

Across Europe, there is general agreement on the necessity to increase activation levels among older employees and thus to reduce the widespread social practice of early retirement. At least three major challenges need to be faced in relation to early exit reforms. Firstly, due to higher life expectancies, low birth rates and large elderly cohorts, all European countries face the problems of demographic shifts and public pension sustainability. This means that increasingly fewer people of working age will have to support a growing number of people in retirement (old age dependency ratios). Therefore, all welfare states are experiencing increases in the overall costs of old age and disability pensions over the past four decades, although the continental European 'welfare states without work' (Esping-Andersen, 1990) have significantly higher costs than the Scandinavian and British welfare states.

Secondly, labour costs are increasing due to rising social expenditure before old age, in particular social assistance, disability pensions and unemployment benefits. Finally, there is the vicious circle of passive labour market policy, arising out of the fact that early retirement has not resulted in new employment opportunities for young people and so has not really redistributed the work. The labour market effect has been rather small. On the one hand, there is a mismatch between the job profiles of young and older employees; on the other hand, companies have not necessarily created additional jobs for younger employees. For instance, in France and Italy, early exits from the labour market are used extensively; however, these countries also suffer comparatively high levels of youth unemployment (Ebbinghaus, 2003).

In fact, increased use of early retirement has reinforced expectations of early exit; as a result, companies are often reluctant to retrain older employees. Hence, the availability of exit pathways (long-term unemployment benefits for older workers) has fostered the dismissal of older employees. In this context, lifelong learning schemes represent one of the key aims of European employment strategy, as they allow employees to orientate their working biographies towards longer labour market integration, which entails many advantages. For instance, employers are more likely to retain their

staff on a longer-term basis after having already invested substantially in them. Thus, political measures favouring training courses will also help to lower the insecurity of employees and help to reduce unemployment. Moreover, (highly) skilled employees will face fewer difficulties in finding new jobs (Gallie, 2002).

Another important strategy for reversing early exit from the labour market will be to change the social expectations of the people involved, namely, older employees themselves, management and workplace representatives. In accordance with Ebbinghaus (2003), this report agrees on the necessity of deliberation, information and persuasion through associational channels, which are likely to be at least as useful as policy instruments already implemented (postponing statutory retirement, reforming disability insurance, closing pre-retirement schemes, activating older workers or fostering gradual retirement). In analysing respondents' preferences, this study revealed that the idea of early retirement appears to be an aspiration and even a perceived right that employees feel they should be entitled to. Despite this global trend, it is important to underline two factors: firstly, the fact that the youngest respondents appear to prefer other options and time arrangements than early retirement for work–life balance; and secondly, that expectations about a higher retirement age, compared with the preferred age, may actually reflect the aforementioned change in expectations that are considered necessary.

The knowledge-based society and lifelong learning

Policies that promote skills development are naturally at the core of life cycle-oriented policies. The improvement of initial education is of crucial importance for reducing youth unemployment, but also for maintaining employability throughout one's working life. However, a further increase in the duration of initial education may not be efficient in the context of 'ageing societies'. Hence, unless the task of upgrading people's skills is placed into the broader context of lifelong learning, then the goal of raising employment rates, which requires, above all, more entries into the labour market, will contradict the goal of fostering the knowledge-based society. Enabling people to maintain their skills and employability is seen as an effective tool for raising the average effective retirement age. However, the shrinking and ageing of the working age population, and its adverse effects on economic growth, not only call for the employment of a larger share of the population, but also underline the importance of raising workers' productivity through human capital investments.

Distribution of work over the life course

Finally, the question arises as to whether life course policies mean working more rather than fewer hours over the life course as a whole in the event of more options for flexible leave periods. Previous studies have shown that Europeans have a keen interest in more flexible working time regimes. Some authors (for example, Bovenberg, 2005) emphasise the advantages of a longer working life: extending one's working life could mean reduced career pressures for parents when their children are young. It could also reduce the need to transfer resources from the main working phase to the retirement phase. At the same time, it would reduce the time and income squeeze experienced in the main working phase. Finally, a longer working life could help to prevent social exclusion among elderly people. Leave periods from the labour market should not be too long to ensure that people stay in touch with the labour market and to maintain human capital resources. The example of the Nordic countries, particularly the case of Sweden, shows that a flexible reallocation of time over the life course requires the options of 'time sovereignty' as an individual right; this would enable people to dispose of their time budget and to arrange the extent and moment of time off according to individual

preferences and requirements. Complete employment guarantees seems to represent another core issue, for example in Sweden, for a regime of good negotiated flexibility, as recent research shows (Anxo and Boulin, 2006).

Life course policies represent a policy area lying at the interface of public policy, collective bargaining and company-level industrial relations. Some experts predict a shortage of skilled labour among younger workers and an ageing workforce in the future; as a result, encouraging the labour force participation of women and of older experienced workers by adapting working conditions appropriately constitutes an important aim. However, policy changes that address only the protective aspects – for example, the right to career breaks to meet caring duties or to reduced working hours in a specific life course phase – are doomed to failure as long as companies continue to shed those employees who want to take time off for different reasons. Rather, the success of a flexible adaptation of life-specific and individually tailored time largely depends on employers' willingness to provide such options – for instance, a reduction of working time or the provision of part-time jobs to parents and older workers – as well as allowing for transitions between the different time use options.

From the employees' point of view, the study concludes that there is an openness to more working hours in exchange for a higher income, particularly among the youngest and childless respondents and among those in certain countries. The popularity of special leave or time saving schemes among these respondents, and of reduced working hours among working parents, in spite of their financial constraints, also emerged from the findings. If other contextual features were in place, namely, appropriate institutional features, work regulations, enterprise and workplace characteristics, and if employers were more in favour of such options, while job security and social security risks were minimised, it is likely that life course policies would meet the needs expressed by European employees.

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Annex 1

Country data

Table A1 Average weekly working hours of working parents, paid and unpaid work

	Mothers in couples			Fathers in couples		
	Paid	Unpaid	All	Paid	Unpaid	All
Nordic countries	36	31	67	43	22	65
Denmark	37	32	69	43	23	66
Finland	37	28	65	44	19	63
Sweden	35	32	67	44	23	67
Continental Europe	30	34	64	43	18	61
Austria	32	31	63	47	14	61
Belgium	36	32	68	45	20	65
France	34	28	62	41	16	57
Germany (east)	34	31	65	41	18	59
Germany (west)	24	40	64	42	20	62
Netherlands	22	40	62	42	19	61
Liberal countries	28	46	74	44	22	66
Ireland	31	43	74	46	22	68
UK	27	47	74	43	21	64
Mediterranean countries	39	36	75	47	21	68
Greece	38	38	76	51	18	69
Italy	35	46	81	46	28	74
Portugal	43	25	68	45	12	57
Spain	38	41	79	46	27	73
NMS	42	33	75	49	21	70
Czech Republic	42	28	70	51	15	66
Estonia	41	33	74	46	18	64
Hungary	40	34	74	51	18	69
Latvia	45	27	72	51	17	68
Lithuania	41	34	75	47	22	69
Poland	43	40	83	51	25	76
Slovakia	42	35	77	49	24	73
Slovenia	43	34	77	47	22	69
ACC3	44	36	80	52	16	68
Bulgaria	41	33	74	51	16	67
Romania	43	41	84	51	24	75
Turkey	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	53	10	63

Weighted averages.

Source: EB 60.3 and CEEB 2003.

Table A2 Life course typology used in Chapter 4

	Childless up to 35 years old		Pre-school/ school children		Childless 36–50 years old		Childless >50 years old		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Nordic countries										
Denmark	110	23	179	37	126	26	71	15	486	100
Finland	86	19	148	32	127	27	101	22	462	100
Sweden	113	20	160	29	111	20	172	31	556	100
Continental Europe										
Austria	132	26	166	33	153	30	57	11	508	100
Belgium	134	27	172	34	116	23	79	16	501	100
France	123	23	200	37	118	22	100	18	541	100
Germany	251	27	239	26	250	27	176	19	916	100
Netherlands	142	24	213	36	105	18	127	22	587	100
Liberal countries										
Ireland	202	32	215	34	117	19	91	15	625	100
UK	96	19	232	46	67	13	108	21	503	100
Mediterranean countries										
Greece	130	32	130	32	85	21	63	15	408	100
Italy	137	28	139	29	120	25	85	18	481	100
Portugal	89	23	172	44	88	22	44	11	393	100
Spain	153	34	132	29	82	18	85	19	452	100
NMS										
Czech Republic	96	18	170	33	149	29	105	20	520	100
Estonia	73	15	178	37	118	25	106	22	475	100
Hungary	85	20	157	36	103	24	90	21	435	100
Latvia	92	18	209	42	118	24	83	17	502	100
Lithuania	61	14	184	42	125	28	73	16	443	100
Poland	69	21	142	44	74	23	39	12	324	100
Slovakia	43	10	151	36	146	35	77	18	417	100
Slovenia	116	31	115	31	100	27	45	12	376	100
ACC3										
Bulgaria	43	13	113	35	92	28	75	23	323	100
Romania	91	28	113	35	71	22	52	16	327	100
Turkey	84	29	145	49	42	14	23	8	294	100
Total	2,751	23	4,174	35	2,803	24	2,127	18	11,855	100

Source: EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003.

Annex 2

Eurobarometer questions

These questions relate to Chapter 4 on time use preferences

Question 2: Working options/working time arrangements. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.2a: If working, which of these options are IMPORTANT to you personally for combining paid work with other activities: 1) 'teleworking'; 2) 'working more or less hours if needed'; 3) 'saving up overtime to take as extra time off'; 4) 'carrying over holidays to next year'; 5) 'taking extra pay instead of holidays'; 6) 'taking extra paid time off for study'; 7) 'taking extra time off to look after relatives'; 8) 'childcare facilities'; 9) 'taking a sabbatical, career break'; 10) 'taking unpaid leave'; 11) 'early retirement'; 12) 'early retirement but with the option of still working part time'?

Q.2b: If working, which of these options have been AVAILABLE to you in your main paid work in the past 12 months: 1) 'teleworking'; 2) 'working more or less hours if needed'; 3) 'saving up overtime to take as extra time off'; 4) 'carrying over holidays to next year'; 5) 'taking extra pay instead of holidays'; 6) 'taking extra paid time off for study'; 7) 'taking extra time off to look after relatives'; 8) 'childcare facilities'; 9) 'taking a sabbatical, career break'; 10) 'taking unpaid leave'; 11) 'early retirement'; 12) 'early retirement but with the option of still working part time'?

Q.2c: If working, which of these options have been TAKEN up by you in your main paid work in the past 12 months: 1) 'teleworking'; 2) 'working more or less hours if needed'; 3) 'saving up overtime to take as extra time off'; 4) 'carrying over holidays to next year'; 5) 'taking extra pay instead of holidays'; 6) 'taking extra paid time off for study'; 7) 'taking extra time off to look after relatives'; 8) 'childcare facilities'; 9) 'taking a sabbatical, career break'; 10) 'taking unpaid leave'; 11) 'early retirement'; 12) 'early retirement but with the option of still working part-time'?

Q.2d: If working, are you fairly SATISFIED or fairly dissatisfied with: 1) 'teleworking'; 2) 'working more or less hours if needed'; 3) 'saving up overtime to take as extra time off'; 4) 'carrying over holidays to next year'; 5) 'taking extra pay instead of holidays'; 6) 'taking extra paid time off for study'; 7) 'taking extra time off to look after relatives'; 8) 'childcare facilities'; 9) 'taking a sabbatical, career break'; 10) 'taking unpaid leave'; 11) 'early retirement'; 12) 'early retirement but with the option of still working part time'?

Question 4: Satisfaction. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.4: Please tell me if you are fairly satisfied or fairly dissatisfied with: 1) 'satisfaction with life in general'; 2) 'satisfaction with health'; 3) 'satisfaction with financial situation'; 4) 'satisfaction with hours spent on paid work'; 5) 'satisfaction with hours spent on voluntary work'; 6) 'satisfaction with hours spent on training, studies or courses'; 7) 'satisfaction with hours spent on household tasks'; 8) 'satisfaction with time spent with family and friends'; 9) 'satisfaction with own free time'; 10) 'satisfaction with division of household tasks'?

Questions 5 and 6: Preferences for working time reduction. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.5c: If working, in the near future, do you plan to reduce your working hours or not? 1) 'yes, definitely'; 2) 'yes, possibly'; 3) 'no'.

Q.5d: If 'yes' in Q.5c, what do you intend to do with this extra free time? 1) 'study, take classes, training'; 2) 'have more free time to myself'; 3) 'look after my partner, children or grandchildren'; 4) 'look after my parents'; 5) 'look after other relatives'; 6) 'do voluntary work'; 7) 'nothing in particular'.

Q.5e: If 'yes' in Q.5c, for how long would you like to reduce your working hours? 1) 'until one year'; 2) 'more than one year'.

Q.6: If working, if you had the possibility to reduce your working hours, which one of the following would you prefer? 1) 'work less hours per day/week'; 2) 'take a longer period of time off during the year'; 3) 'both'.

Question 10: Personal time allocation. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.10: If working, do you tend to agree with each of the following statements? 1) 'the work I do is an important part of my life'; 2) 'I could easily get by with less money'; 3) 'I would continue working even if I did not need the money any more'; 4) 'I would like to reduce the time spent working, but I need the money that I earn'; 5) 'I would like to reduce the time spent working, even if I earn less money'; 6) 'I would like to work more hours if it enables me to earn more money'; 7) 'working part time (or taking frequent leave) is an indicator that someone is less committed to his/her work'; 8) 'working part time (or taking frequent leave) is bad for someone's career'; 9) 'working part time (or taking frequent leave) usually means that you have to do more in less time'; 10) 'working part time (or taking frequent leave) means that you get less interesting tasks to do'; 11) 'working part time (or taking frequent leave) is possible in my present job'.

Questions 12 and 13: Retirement. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.12: At what age do you expect to/did you retire?

Q.13: At what age would you like/would you have liked to retire?

Question 14: Flexible retirement. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.14: When you are/were close to retirement, would you/did you rather: 1) 'completely stop working'; 2) 'work part time before retirement'; 3) 'work full time before retirement, but with less responsibility'?

Questions 15, 16, 17: Postponing retirement. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.15: If working, would you be interested in postponing your retirement by two or three years, if it meant you could: 1) 'keep the same salary but work fewer hours prior to retiring'; 2) 'take a sabbatical/paid leave of absence during working life'; 3) 'increase future pension'?

Q.16: If 'yes' in Q.15a and/or in Q.15b, what would you do with this extra time? 1) 'study, take classes, training'; 2) 'have more free time to myself'; 3) 'look after my partner, children or grandchildren'; 4) 'look after my parents'; 5) 'look after other relatives'; 6) 'do voluntary work'; 7) 'nothing in particular'.

Q.17: If 'no' in Q.15a and Q.15b and Q.15c, why would you not be interested in postponing your retirement? 1) 'I do not like the idea of retiring later'; 2) 'I am not interested in increasing my future pension'; 3) 'I do not need more time now or in the future'.

Question 18: Reduced pension in exchange. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.18: Would you be interested in reducing your pension, for instance by 10%, if it meant you could: 1) 'keep the same salary, but work fewer hours prior to retiring'; 2) 'take a sabbatical/paid leave of absence during your working life'; 3) 'retire two or three years earlier'?

Question 20: Lifelong learning. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.20a: All except 'retired', would you be able to continue to learn or be trained throughout your life?

Q.20b: If 'yes' in Q.20a, why? 1) 'to adapt to the rapid changes in society'; 2) 'to improve job situation'; 3) 'to avoid becoming or remaining unemployed'.

Questions 21, 22, 23: Training course. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.21: Have you done a training course in the past 12 months, or not? (If 'yes') did you do the course because your employer asked you to, because it was compulsory in order to get benefits (unemployment or other), or because you wanted to?

Q.22: If 'yes' in Q.21, how many hours were involved in the last training course you went on?

Q.23: If 'yes' in Q.21, who paid for that training course? 1) 'the company/organisation I work for'; 2) 'the state/national government'; 3) 'regional or local government'; 4) 'I paid for it myself'; 5) 'employment agency'; 6) 'trade union'; 7) 'it was free'; 8) 'other'.

Questions 25 and 26: Right to leave. Items in EB 60.3 and CCEB 2003

Q.25a: Do you think that people should be able to: 1) 'take time off work to be with their partners, children or grandchildren'; 2) 'take time off work to look after sick or elderly members of their family'; 3) 'take time off work to study or take courses'; 4) 'take time off work to do voluntary work'; 5) 'take time off work for their own benefit'; 6) 'have access to childcare facilities at their workplace'; 7) 'take early retirement'?

Q.25b: If 'yes' in Q.25a, who should mainly pay for it? 1) 'the employer'; 2) 'the government'; 3) 'the person who works'.

Q.26: Would you personally be prepared to pay more taxes or social welfare contributions for any of these options [in Q.25a]? 1) 'yes'; 2) 'no'; 3) 'it depends'.

European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

First European Quality of Life Survey

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

2007 – VIII, 110 p. – 21 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 92-897-0971-5

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