



# Statistics in focus

## POPULATION AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

THEME 3 – 12/2003

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# How women and men spend their time

## Results from 13 European countries

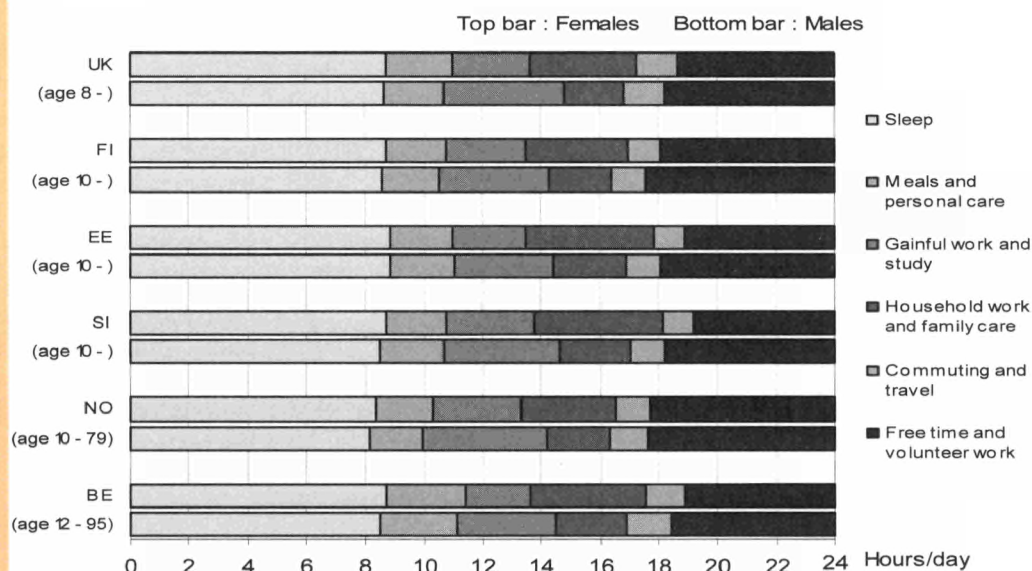
*Christel Aliaga & Karin Wingvist*

Women and men have similar patterns of spending their time across Europe but there are also some remarkable differences between the countries investigated. The total time spent on gainful work/study and domestic work (definition of activities, see methodological notes) varies between 6 and 7 hours per day when taking an average over the whole year – all weekends and holidays included, see figures 1-3. The time is highest in Slovenia and Hungary and lowest in Belgium and Finland. Daily commuting and travel time is around 1 hour, somewhat more in the United Kingdom, Sweden and Belgium and somewhat less in France and Hungary.

Free time is time devoted to television-video or to other media, leisure time (sports, hobbies, resting and unspecified leisure) and socializing time (participatory activities, social life, entertainment and culture). These activities occupy 4½ to 6½ hours per day, more in Norway and Finland and less in France and Hungary. Volunteer work and informal help to other households is classified with free time in the figures.

Finally, women and men devote almost half of their time to sleep, meals and personal care. People sleep between 8 and 9 hours per day on average and devote between 2 and 3 hours to meals and other personal care (dress, toilet etc.). France shows the longest average sleeping time with slightly more than 9 hours and also more time spent on personal care than other countries (table 1). In all countries, women devote slightly more time than men to sleep except for Estonia where the time is equal. The same is true for personal care except for Hungary, Estonia and Slovenia. If the description only includes persons in employment, the results are very similar.

Figure 1: Average time use by activity for females and males.



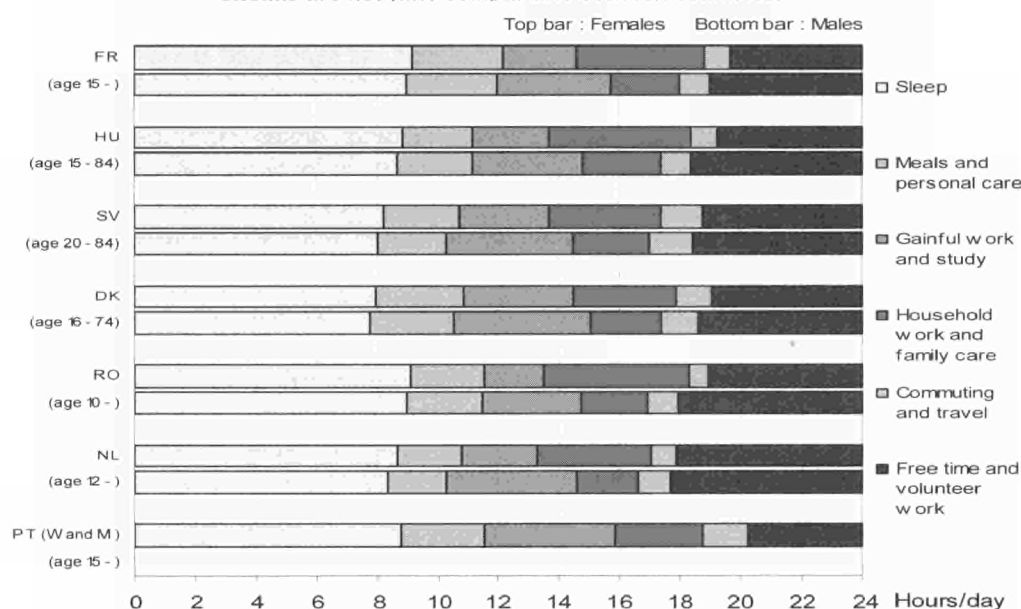
The sources of all data are: National Time use surveys, see Methodological Notes.



Several European countries have conducted recent time use studies. A sample of individuals has each kept a diary for two days, distributed over the whole year. The results, presented as average time per day over the whole year, allow us to describe how time is spent; for example, how working time and the time for other activities are distributed for persons in different stages of life in these countries. Some survey results are available for 13 European countries. Figure 1 presents statistics for the United Kingdom, Finland, Estonia, Slovenia, Norway and Belgium. The surveys in these countries follow, to a large extent, the harmonized guidelines issued by Eurostat. This means that they are comparable between countries, concerning the slight differences in age groups covered, see below. Figure 2 presents results for France, Hungary, Sweden, Denmark, Romania, the Netherlands and Portugal.

These countries have deviated from the guidelines and the main problem of comparability is the difference in age group covered by the survey. Note that the survey in France was done before the 35 hours reform, see more notes on page 7 about the methodologies and differences in methodology that might influence the results. In Fig 2, results from the Netherlands, Romania and Portugal are included although they are not comparable with the other countries. On the other hand, it is possible to compare women and men within each country. The Netherlands have conducted their survey with a simplified method while Portugal and Romania have only covered two months in the autumn. Denmark has covered 2 months in the spring and 2 months in the autumn. For Portugal, at present only results for the total population are available.

Figure 2: Average time use by activity for females and males.  
Results are not fully comparable between countries.



For Denmark, Romania, the Netherlands and Portugal the survey period/design is different.

## There is a large difference in the gender division of gainful work and domestic work

Domestic work (household work, errands, do-it-yourself, care of children and of adults, etc) takes up more time than gainful work/study in Belgium, France, Estonia and Hungary and less time in Norway, the United Kingdom and Finland. The fact that the age group of the population surveyed is different will influence the results. In the countries where the survey is restricted so that very young and very old persons are excluded, the average time for gainful work/study is higher. This is the case especially for Sweden and to some extent for Denmark (Sweden age 20 – 84 and Denmark age 16 – 74). Table 1 shows that in Sweden, on an average day over a whole year, 49% of men and 37% of women perform gainful work and the corresponding figures for Denmark are 45% and 37%, while the percentages for

other countries are generally lower.

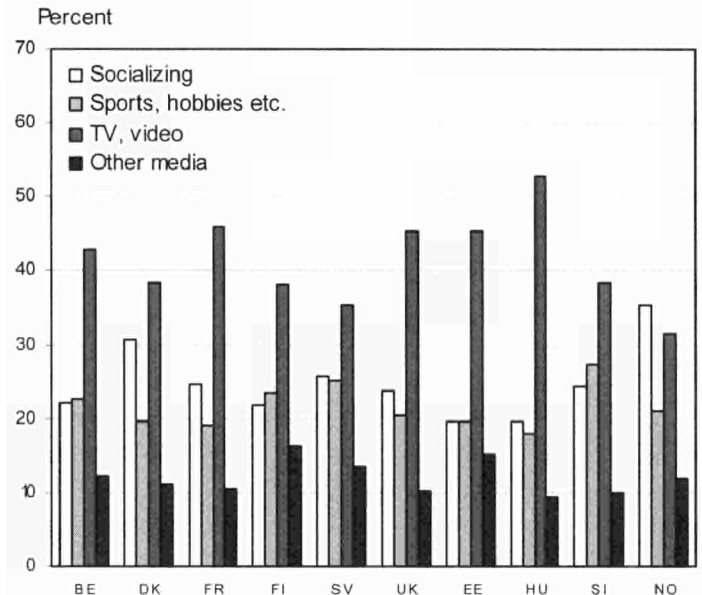
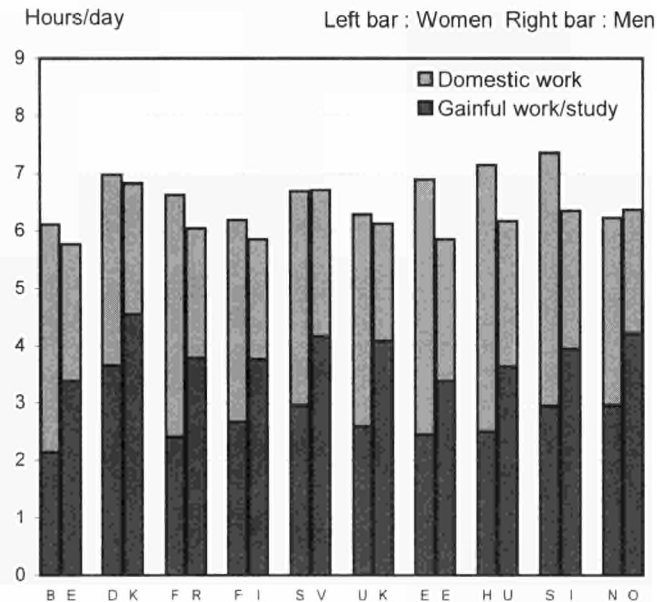
For women and men the division of the time between the two types of work is very different. In all the countries, men devote more time to gainful work/study than to domestic work. On the other hand, the time used for domestic work of women is on average higher than the time in gainful work/study in almost all the countries, except for Denmark and Norway, where this time is nearly the same. Note that these divergences reflect partly differences between men and women in employment and part-time employment rates in the various countries. Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia show the highest time for domestic work - in particular among women.

Men spend on average at least one hour per day more than women do on gainful work/study, while women devote at least one hour more than men do to domestic work. In addition, if the average total time of gainful work/study and domestic work per day is considered, working time of women is somewhat higher than that of

men in Belgium, Finland, France (from 20 minutes to more than 30 minutes). It is even higher in Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia (1 hour approximately) and it is virtually equivalent in Sweden, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Norway.

Figure 3: Total working time for women and men.

Figure 4: Free time by type of activity.



### Watching TV takes about 40% of free time in most countries

Depending on country, free time is between 4½ hours and more than 6 hours taking the average for all days of the year, see table 1. Free time includes leisure time (sports, hobbies, resting and unspecified leisure), socializing time (participatory activities, social life, entertainment and culture) and time devoted to television-video and other media.

Both for women and for men, watching television occupies an important share of free time, around 40% in the majority of the countries. Hungary exceeds 50% while this share is below 40% in Norway and Sweden. Socializing time occupies 20 – 25 % of free time in most countries. This is slightly higher than the time spent on sports, hobbies etc. in the majority of the countries, with

the exception of Denmark and Norway, where the share devoted to socializing is higher, see figure 4. In Norway, some of the time for meals – eating together with someone – has been classified as socializing, giving Norway a slightly higher share for socializing (and a shorter time for meals).

In all the surveyed countries, men have overall more free time than women, these differences reaching almost 1 hour per day in Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia. In general, free time is spent very similarly but on an average day there are more women than men declaring some socializing time, the divergences being particularly marked for Finland, the United Kingdom, Sweden and Denmark, see table 1.

Table 1: Average time per day spent on different activities and the percentage of persons performing an activity on an average per day for females and males

Age group	Belgium 12 - 95 years		Denmark 16 - 74 years		France 15 - years		Finland 10 - years		Sweden 20 - 84 years		UK 8 - years		Estonia 10 - years		Hungary 15 - 84 years		Slovenia 10 - years		Norway 10 - 79 years	
	Hours and min	%	Hours and min	%	Hours and min	%	Hours and min	%	Hours and min	%	Hours and min	%	Hours and min	%	Hours and min	%	Hours and min	%	Hours and min	%
	<b>Sleep</b>	<b>8:34</b>		<b>7:53</b>		<b>9:03</b>		<b>8:38</b>		<b>8:08</b>		<b>8:40</b>		<b>8:49</b>		<b>8:43</b>		<b>8:36</b>		<b>8:15</b>
women	8:41	100	7:58	100	9:10	100	8:42	100	8:12	100	8:43	100	8:50	100	8:49	100	8:40	100	8:20	100
men	8:27	100	7:47	100	8:58	100	8:33	100	8:03	100	8:37	100	8:50	100	8:36	100	8:31	100	8:09	100
<b>Meals and personal care</b>	<b>2:40</b>		<b>2:48</b>		<b>3:01</b>		<b>2:03</b>		<b>2:22</b>		<b>2:10</b>		<b>2:11</b>		<b>2:24</b>		<b>2:09</b>		<b>1:54</b>	
women	2:42	100	2:52	100	3:01	100	2:06	100	2:30	100	2:16	100	2:09	100	2:19	100	2:07	100	2:01	100
men	2:37	100	2:42	100	3:00	100	1:59	100	2:14	99	2:04	99	2:12	100	2:30	100	2:11	100	1:48	100
<b>Gainful work</b>	<b>2:02</b>		<b>3:27</b>		<b>2:34</b>		<b>2:35</b>		<b>3:17</b>		<b>2:40</b>		<b>2:22</b>		<b>2:33</b>		<b>2:42</b>		<b>2:59</b>	
women	1:28	31	2:59	37	1:55	30	2:04	30	2:40	37	1:56	29	2:00	29	2:01	28	2:13	27	2:20	34
men	2:38	46	4:00	45	3:16	43	3:12	41	3:57	49	3:25	43	2:49	36	3:08	39	3:13	36	3:38	47
<b>Study</b>	<b>0:43</b>		<b>0:37</b>		<b>0:30</b>		<b>0:35</b>		<b>0:16</b>		<b>0:40</b>		<b>0:30</b>		<b>0:30</b>		<b>0:44</b>		<b>0:36</b>	
women	0:41	16	0:40	13	0:30	9	0:36	13	0:18	8	0:40	13	0:27	10	0:29	9	0:44	14	0:38	12
men	0:45	17	0:33	9	0:31	9	0:34	11	0:13	5	0:40	13	0:34	12	0:30	9	0:44	13	0:35	11
<b>Household work and family care</b>	<b>3:12</b>		<b>2:51</b>		<b>3:17</b>		<b>2:52</b>		<b>3:10</b>		<b>2:53</b>		<b>3:32</b>		<b>3:39</b>		<b>3:26</b>		<b>2:42</b>	
women	3:58	98	3:20	96	4:13	95	3:32	96	3:44	98	3:41	93	4:27	96	4:39	96	4:25	94	3:16	96
men	2:23	95	2:17	90	2:16	80	2:05	86	2:33	92	2:03	83	2:28	84	2:33	84	2:24	79	2:09	89
<b>Volunteer work</b>	<b>0:09</b>		<b>0:13</b>		<b>0:13</b>		<b>0:14</b>		<b>0:12</b>		<b>0:10</b>		<b>0:14</b>		<b>0:10</b>		<b>0:08</b>		<b>0:09</b>	
women	0:08	15	0:11	12	0:12	11	0:14	13	0:12	14	0:12	13	0:13	11	0:07	5	0:06	6	0:09	10
men	0:09	15	0:16	12	0:15	10	0:15	11	0:13	13	0:09	9	0:16	11	0:13	6	0:10	7	0:09	8
<b>Socialising</b>	<b>1:02</b>		<b>1:21</b>		<b>0:55</b>		<b>1:04</b>		<b>1:10</b>		<b>1:07</b>		<b>0:50</b>		<b>0:51</b>		<b>1:09</b>		<b>2:02</b>	
women	1:05	83	1:26	79	0:55	52	1:08	71	1:15	77	1:13	69	0:51	54	0:48	49	1:08	68	2:15	90
men	0:59	78	1:16	66	0:54	45	1:00	56	1:04	63	1:02	56	0:48	47	0:54	51	1:10	64	1:49	78
<b>Leisure time</b>	<b>1:13</b>		<b>1:00</b>		<b>0:53</b>		<b>1:23</b>		<b>1:20</b>		<b>1:06</b>		<b>1:04</b>		<b>0:56</b>		<b>1:26</b>		<b>1:18</b>	
women	1:08	87	0:51	59	0:41	42	1:12	72	1:13	71	0:57	59	0:54	55	0:47	41	1:12	66	1:13	68
men	1:18	86	1:11	59	1:06	49	1:36	72	1:27	70	1:15	59	1:17	60	1:06	49	1:40	71	1:23	64
<b>TV video</b>	<b>2:18</b>		<b>1:58</b>		<b>2:07</b>		<b>2:16</b>		<b>1:53</b>		<b>2:26</b>		<b>2:27</b>		<b>2:44</b>		<b>2:01</b>		<b>1:57</b>	
women	2:12	93	1:51	81	2:02	77	2:08	86	1:45	82	2:16	87	2:15	86	2:39	88	1:50	83	1:45	83
men	2:24	94	2:06	83	2:12	80	2:26	86	2:02	84	2:37	88	2:40	87	2:49	87	2:12	87	2:10	85
<b>Radio, music, reading</b>	<b>0:39</b>		<b>0:34</b>		<b>0:29</b>		<b>0:58</b>		<b>0:43</b>		<b>0:33</b>		<b>0:49</b>		<b>0:29</b>		<b>0:31</b>		<b>0:44</b>	
women	0:34	68	0:34	57	0:28	39	1:00	75	0:45	67	0:33	50	0:49	59	0:25	33	0:31	44	0:47	70
men	0:44	71	0:33	50	0:30	39	0:56	68	0:41	57	0:33	45	0:51	56	0:34	43	0:32	43	0:41	61
<b>Travel</b>	<b>1:23</b>		<b>1:15</b>		<b>0:55</b>		<b>1:08</b>		<b>1:23</b>		<b>1:24</b>		<b>1:07</b>		<b>0:56</b>		<b>1:06</b>		<b>1:15</b>	
women	1:16	92	1:14	85	0:51	67	1:06	78	1:20	87	1:21	87	1:00	76	0:51	76	1:01	78	1:10	87
men	1:31	95	1:15	84	1:00	73	1:11	80	1:27	91	1:27	89	1:11	81	1:02	81	1:11	83	1:20	89
<b>Unspecified activities</b>	<b>0:05</b>		<b>0:03</b>		<b>0:03</b>		<b>0:14</b>		<b>0:06</b>		<b>0:11</b>		<b>0:05</b>		<b>0:05</b>		<b>0:02</b>		<b>0:00</b>	
women	0:07		0:04		0:02		0:12		0:06		0:12		0:05		0:06		0:03		0:06	
men	0:05		0:04		0:02		0:13		0:06		0:08		0:04		0:05		0:02		0:09	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24 h</b>		<b>24 h</b>		<b>24 h</b>		<b>24 h</b>		<b>24 h</b>		<b>24 h</b>		<b>24 h</b>		<b>24 h</b>		<b>24 h</b>		<b>24 h</b>	

Hours and minutes gives average time per day over the whole year, % gives percentage of persons per day who has performed the activity

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## Employed persons sleep less and have less free time

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Persons who are employed have more of their time predetermined. Employed persons are all employees and self-employed including persons who are temporarily absent (including those on maternity/paternity/parental leave or vacation). For all the countries, they have shorter sleeping time (10 – 30 minutes per day on average) and devote overall less time to domestic tasks, including care of other persons (childcare, etc.). Employed men devote more time to gainful work/study than women do, which is partly explained by the more widespread part-time work among women and by women taking more parental leave. The total time devoted to work including domestic work is higher than for the remainder of the population. Women's total time for gainful and domestic work is about ½ hour higher than men's in Belgium and France,

even higher (about 1 hour) in Estonia, Hungary and Slovenia and almost equivalent or equivalent in Sweden, Finland, the United Kingdom, Denmark and Norway.

Employed persons reduce their time for sleep, meals and personal care but also their free time. Even if the time is reduced, the share of the time devoted to TV and video is not lower than that of the remainder of the population. Lastly, for employed persons, socializing time seems to occupy a more important share in relation to the time spent on sport, hobbies etc. than in the whole of the population. The share of persons involved in leisure activities on an average day is less for employed persons.

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## The differences in time use between women and men are larger in households with children

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The household structure and in particular the presence of children is closely linked to time use, see figure 5. In particular, for women and men in couples, the allocation of the time between gainful work/study and domestic activities (including parental) is different if there are children in the household. This difference is even more pronounced when the children are young (below 7 years). Note that the grouping is done according to the age of the youngest child. In the group where the youngest child is below 7 years, it is very probable that there are more small children in the household.

For women in couples, the average time for gainful work/study is often less when there are children in the household and even less when there is at least one child below 7 years. The difference between women in couples without children and women in couples with the youngest child 7 – 17 years is more than one hour per day in Belgium and France, while the difference is very small or none at all in Slovenia, Estonia, Sweden and Finland. If the youngest child is less than 7 years the difference is between 1½ and 2 hours per day in most countries. The difference is larger than 2 hours in Hungary and the United Kingdom.

In contrast, there is a clear tendency that the time for domestic work is longer if women have children and even longer when the children are small. Then the time for domestic work is between 5½ and 7½ hours per day, depending on country. In the absence of children, the time spent on gainful work/study is higher than on

domestic tasks in all countries except Hungary. This starts to be reversed for the majority of the countries when the youngest child in the household is 7 to 17 years, except in Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland. When the youngest child is under 7 years, women devote on average more time to domestic work than to gainful work/study in all the countries, between 6 hours more in Hungary and just over 2 hours more in Denmark. This is, in fact, due to lower employment rates for women with children.

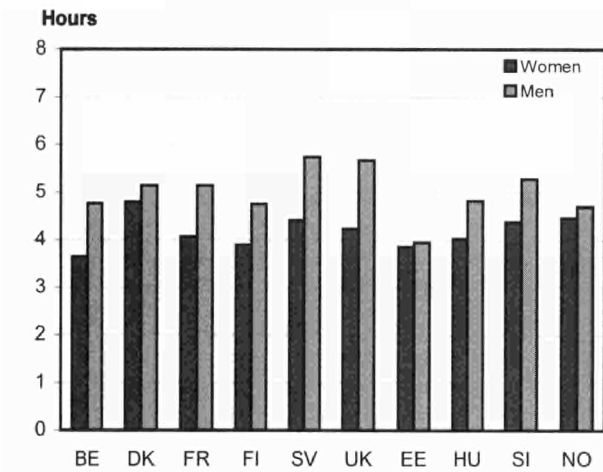
For men in couples, the pattern is not quite as clear, see figure 5. Regarding the domestic time (including parental time) the tendency is the same as for women. It increases when they are in a household with children and even more when the children are small, in particular in Denmark, Sweden and Norway. Regarding the time of gainful work/study of men in couples, it is slightly higher or remains almost stable for those who have children.

For men as well as for women, the total work time, the time spent on gainful work and on domestic tasks, is higher when there are children in the household and even higher when the children are young in most countries. The differences in total time of work of men and women in couples with small children are large in Estonia, Slovenia and Hungary where total working time of women remains about 1 hour higher than those of men.

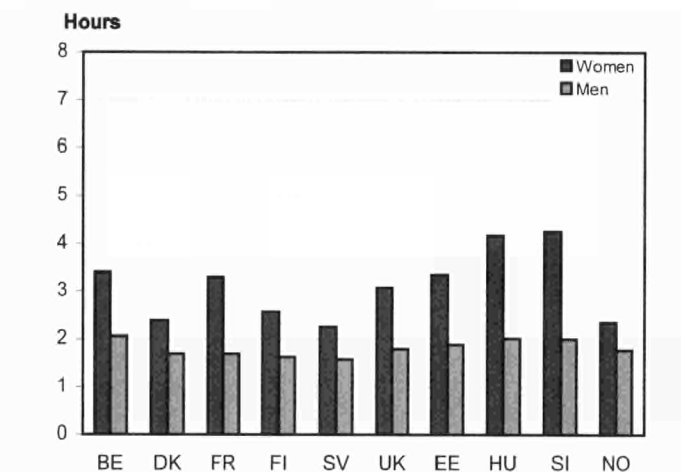
Figure 5: Gainful work/study and domestic work in different types of households by sex

**Persons under 45 years in couple without children in the household**

**Gainful work/study**

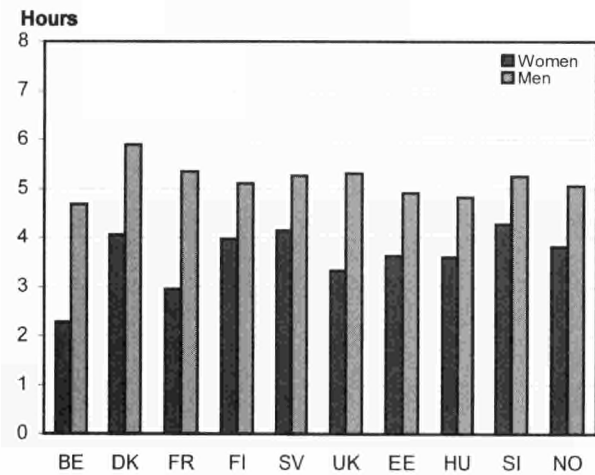


**Domestic work**

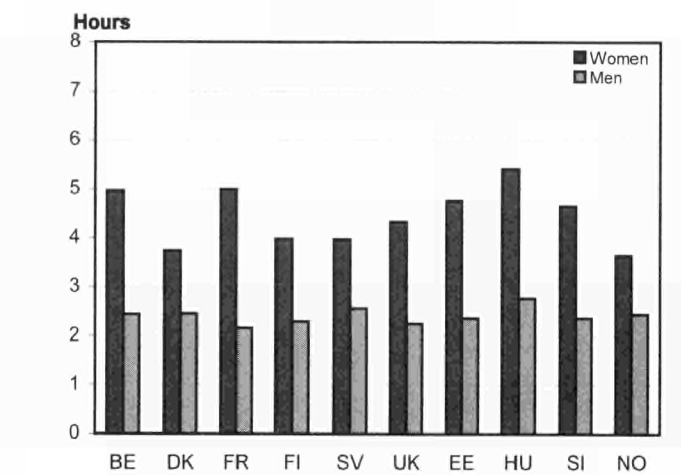


**Persons in couple with the youngest child 7 - 17 years old**

**Gainful work/study**

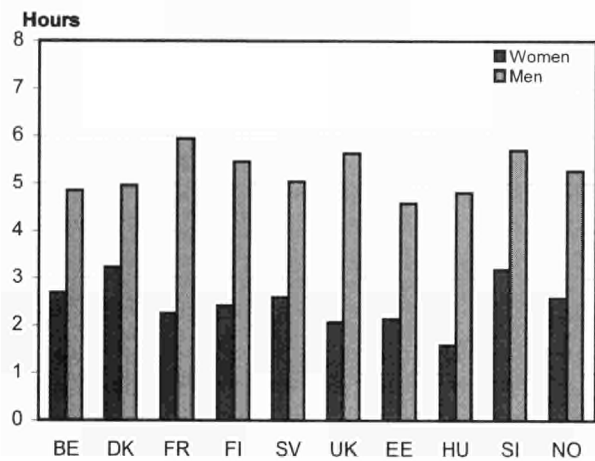


**Domestic work**

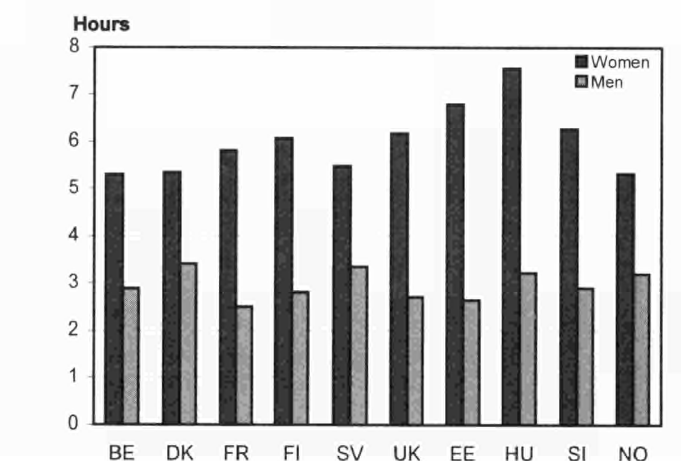


**Persons in couple with the youngest child under 7 years old**

**Gainful work/study**



**Domestic work**



## ➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

### Data sources, classification and definitions

Data originate from the national Time Use Surveys (TUS), countries and sources see below. In TUS a representative sample of individuals has completed a diary during one weekday and one week-end day distributed over the whole year. One has to bear in mind that the results are estimates and that sampling errors affect the results. For small groups of individuals the errors are larger.

The activities have been coded and most countries have followed the Harmonised European Time Use (HETUS) activity coding list. The sampled persons have also answered questions related to the individual and to the household. The activity codes have been grouped into eleven major activities, see below and the questionnaires have been used to classify the persons according to a life cycle variable with 11 categories. Basic tables have been produced on activities by lifecycle, employment and sex, which show average time per day and participation rate. The tables will be available as an Eurostat working paper.

Main activities for most of the figures in this publication are shown in the following table:

<b>Main activity</b>	<b>Activity</b>
Sleep	Sleep
Meals and personal care	Eating, unspecified personal care and other personal care
Gainful work/study	Employment, travel as part of work and study
Domestic work	Household work and family care
Volunteer work	Volunteer work and informal help to other households
Free time	
Socializing	Participatory activities, social life and entertainment and culture
Leisure time	Sports and outdoor activities, hobbies and games, unspecified leisure time and resting
TV, video	TV and video
Radio, music, reading	Other mass media
Travel	Travel excluding travel as part of work
Unspecified activities	Other, unspecified and filling in TUS diary

### European Time Use Surveys – Sources, reference years and sample sizes

Country - Source	Fieldwork period	Population covered - age	Sample size - Respondents	Individuals in population (1000s) <sup>1</sup>	Comment
<b>Belgium (BE) – National Institute of Statistics and Free University Brussels</b>	December 1998 – February 2000	12 – 95	8 382		
<b>Denmark (DK) – Danish National Institute of Social Research</b>	March, April, Sept and Oct 2001	16 – 74	2 739	4 298	Two consecutive days
<b>France (FR) - INSEE</b>	February 1998 - February 1999	15 -	15 541	47 231	One diary day
<b>Netherlands (NL) – Central Bureau of Statistics</b>	January 2001 – December 2001	12 -	5 717	13 380	One diary day, self-coded activities
<b>Norway (NO) – Statistics Norway</b>	February 2000 - February 2001	10 – 79	3 211	3 674	
<b>Portugal (PT) – Instituto Nacional de Estatística</b>	October, November 1999	15 -	8 133	9 323	Simplified survey
<b>Finland (FI) – Statistics Finland</b>	March 1999 - February 2000	10 -	5 332	4 451	
<b>Sweden (SV) – Statistics Sweden</b>	October 2000 - September 2001	20 – 84	3 998	6 538	
<b>United Kingdom (UK) – Office for National Statistics</b>	June 2000 - September 2001	8 -	10 366	53 016	
<b>Estonia (EE) – Statistical Office of Estonia</b>	April 1999 - March 2000.	10 -	5 728	1 290	
<b>Hungary (HU) – Hungarian Central Statistical Office</b>	September 1999 - September 2000.	15 – 84	11 421	8 206	
<b>Romania (RO) – National Institute of Statistics</b>	August, September 2000.	10 -	17 751	20 072	
<b>Slovenia (SI) – Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia</b>	April 2000 - March 2001	10 -	6 190	1 990	

<sup>1</sup> Source: Population statistics

# Further information:

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