



**In times of recession:
Women and men at work and work-life balance
throughout the life course in Europe:
comments and
some findings from EWCS analysis**

Greet Vermeylen, research manager

Working conditions and industrial relations unit

ESRC Work Life seminars

Work-life balance, fairness and social justice during austerity

Manchester, 11 April 2014

Men and women at work in Europe: some elements to consider...

- Evolution of working conditions
 - ▶ Men and women on the labour market: availability for work
 - ▶ Diversified work patterns: male breadwinner, modified male breadwinner, dual earners
 - ▶ Job and employment quality: some workers cluster many negative aspects
- Countries matters : institutions / social infrastructure / preferences
 - ▶ Times in the society (/city)
 - ▶ Social protection systems & labour law eg part time, (parental) leave,...
 - ▶ Social infrastructure, care facilities (public or private), school systems, including school hours and afterschool care: influence how people enter and stay on labour market
 - > changes in times of recession (in different ways)
- Gender roles within the family: impact choices.
 - ▶ Men and women work differently : flexibility for whom?
 - ▶ Flexibility and predictability of working time
- Needs and choices change over the life course of men and women.
 - ▶ transitions
- Working time arrangements & work-life balance
 - ▶ working hours can facilitate the organisation of the private life (flexitime, emergency leave, part time, leave)
 - ▶ Working time flexibility:
 - not per se good or bad for either both employers / employees
 - choices matter
 - ▶ Companies can make a difference -> not all working time arrangements are costly

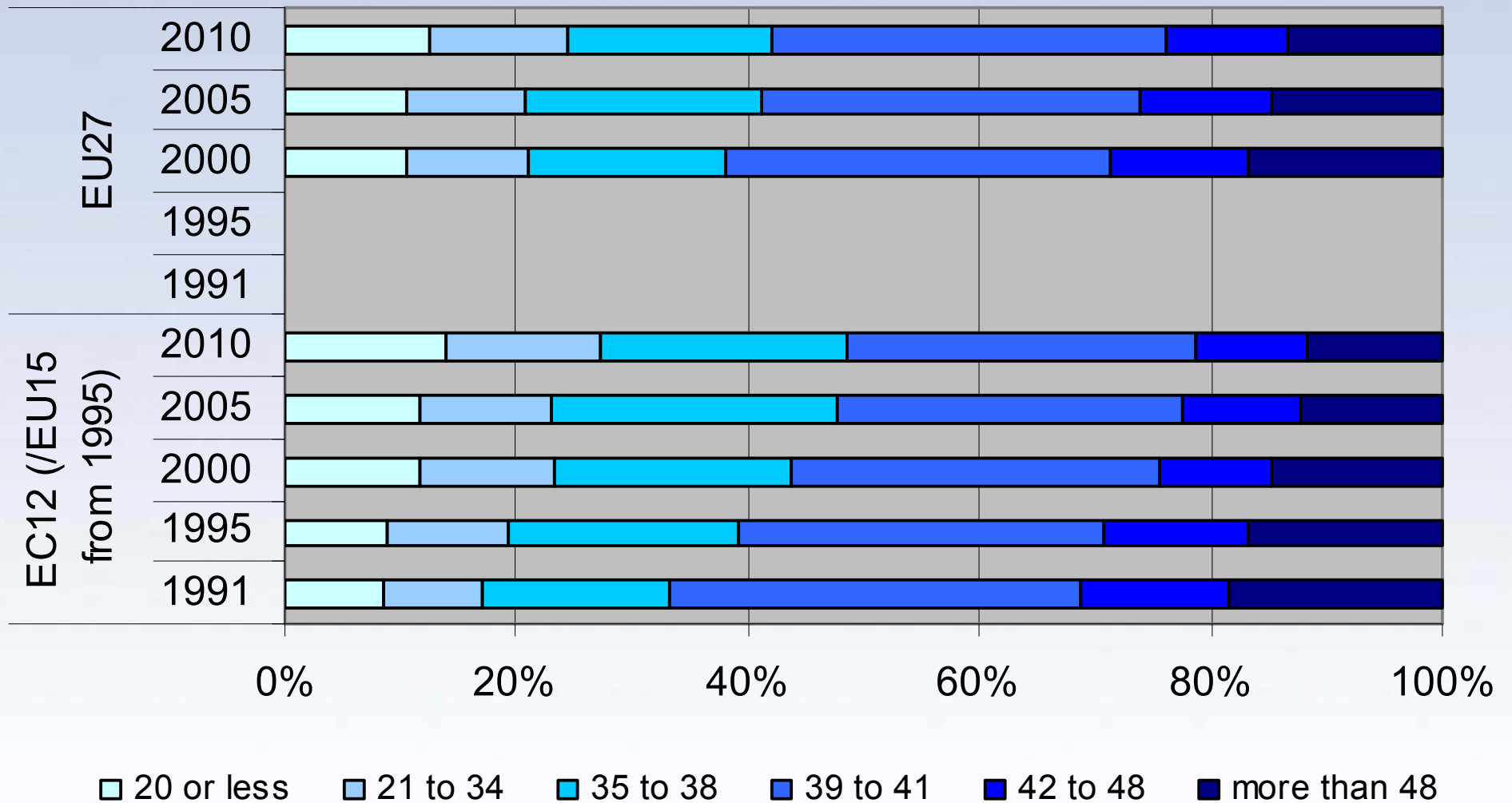
European Working Conditions Survey

- European wide survey – 5 waves already: 1991, 1995, 2000 (+01/02), 2005 and 2010 currently preparing 2015
- 1 questionnaire / translated in all the languages
 - ▶ 2010: 25 languages and 16 variants
- Country coverage: EU + neighbour countries
 - ▶ 5th EWCS (2010) : 34 countries covered : EU27 + NO + ACC3 + IPA3
 - ▶ 43000 interviews in total (1000/4000 interview per country)
- Workers survey: employees and self-employed (15+) (LFS def)
 - ▶ Face to face interviews in people's homes (40 min)
- A wide range of aspects of conditions and work and employment:
 - ▶ Demographics, job characteristics, household info (incl work at home), working time : duration, organisation physical and psychosocial work factors, place of work, work organisation, training, work-life balance, voice, say, health, job satisfaction, earnings
 - ▶ Revision questionnaire: with support of a questionnaire development group + Governing Board
 - ▶ Gender mainstreaming : central in reflection for revision
 - ▶ Quality process: strict quality assurance mechanisms & documentation



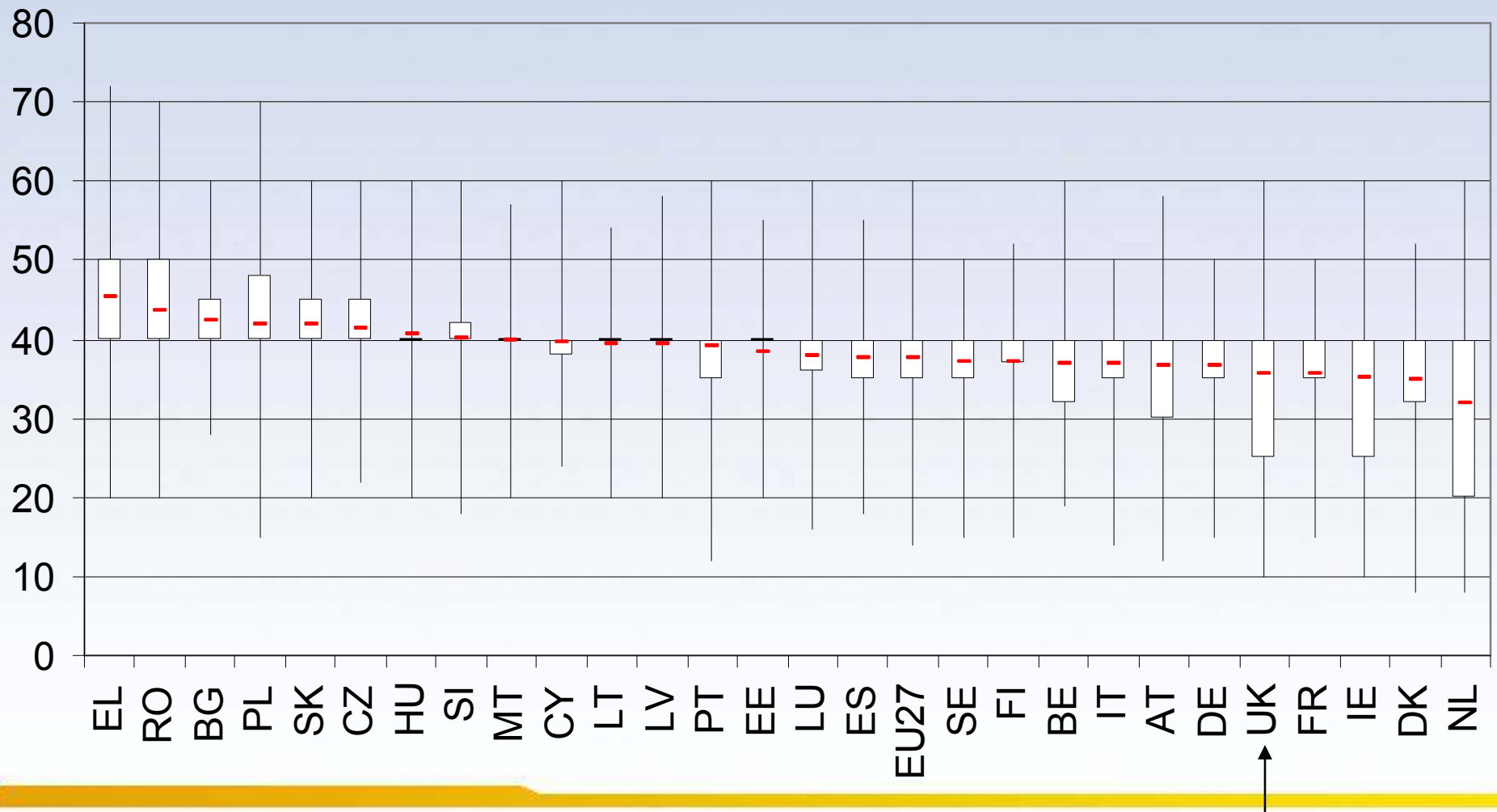
Eurofound

Evolution of weekly working hours, 1991 – 2010, EC12, EU15 and EU27 (%)



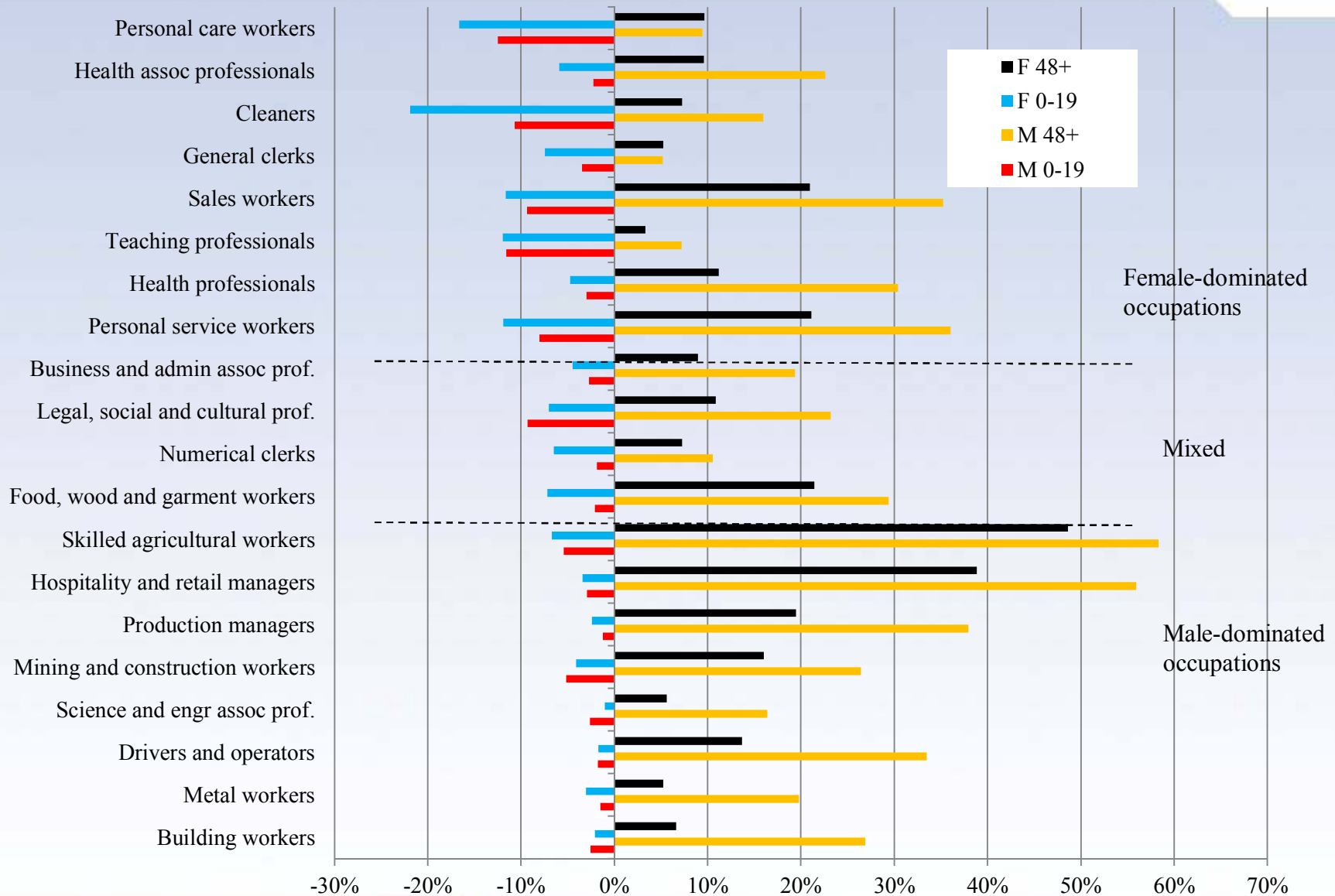


Average working hours and distribution of working hours, per country



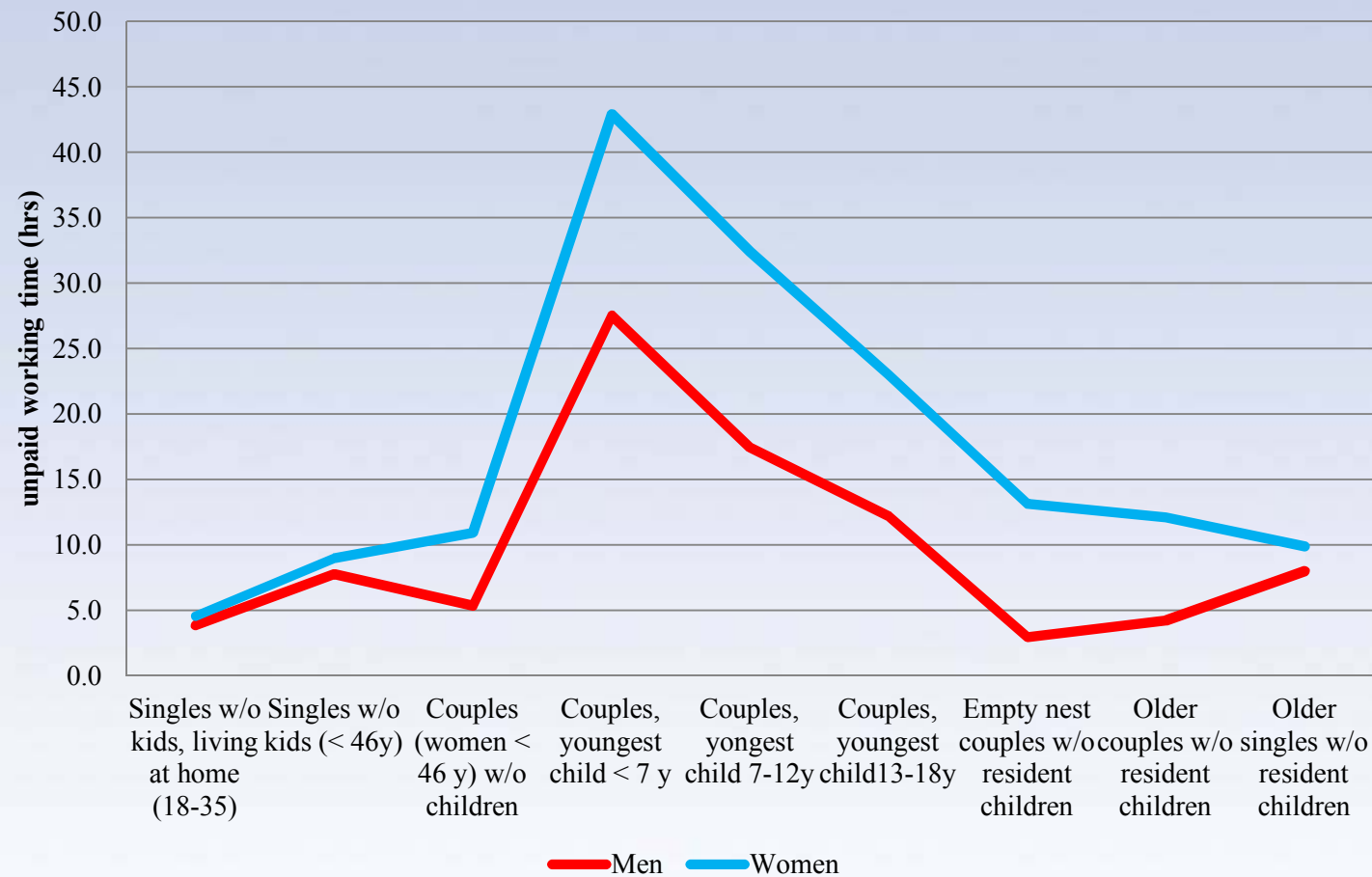


Long and short hours working among the largest occupations by sex





Unpaid working time (care and household activities) over the life course



- Union formation
 - increases unpaid working time for women
 - decreases for men
- During parenting phase employed women spend twice as much hours on these activities as men
- When entering parenting phase
 - women reduce paid work by 4 hrs but increase unpaid work by 25 hrs
 - men's unpaid work increases by 12 hrs
- The decision of men to engage in care work is more circumstance dependent than it is for women
 - working time organisation, atypical working hours



Working time preferences for men and women over the life course

- On average a desire for fewer hours, for men and women
 - ▶ Particularly marked among countries with very long hours (TK,AL, GR) but also SE
 - ▶ A few countries with a preference for more hours for women and men (LV, LT), for men (EE, MT) and for women (NL, IT, IE)
- Longer hours desired among part-timers
 - ▶ particularly in high part-time use countries
- Life course variations are important
 - presence of children and for older workers
 - Women in the parenting phase show a higher likelihood to prefer an reduction of working time
 - Men with children (aged 7-12) are less likely to opt for a reduction of working time or do not want to change it
 - Both, older women and men, do not wish to increase working time
- Public sector male employees report smaller differences between usual and preferred hours
 - ▶ Women in private sector tend to report smaller preference gap



Work life balance

- 18% of workers have problems with work-life balance
 - ▶ Men > women
 - ▶ esp. men 30-49 yrs old
 - ▶ Dissatisfaction for women more evenly spread over career
 - ▶ Presence of children is important determinant
 - ▶ Likely to have balance: part-time work, flexibility in working time arrangements, working the same hours every day, having fixed starting and finishing times, not difficult to take time off during working hours
 - ▶ Not likely to have balance: working long hours, night work, evening work and weekend work

Recap

- Reconciliation between working life and private life:
 - Important for sustainability of work (EU2020 goal of smart, sustainable and inclusive growth)
 - Differences between countries exist
 - Issues are not the same for all workers:
 - Job and employment quality matters (clustering disadvantages)
 - To be put into a context of social provisions, a social system and social infrastructure: impacts of cuts
 - Not all measure to improve working conditions/wlb are costly
 - and do have more positive effects (engagement, less HR problems for companies)
 - It is an issue for all: men and women, companies, social partners, governments and European bodies



Thank you

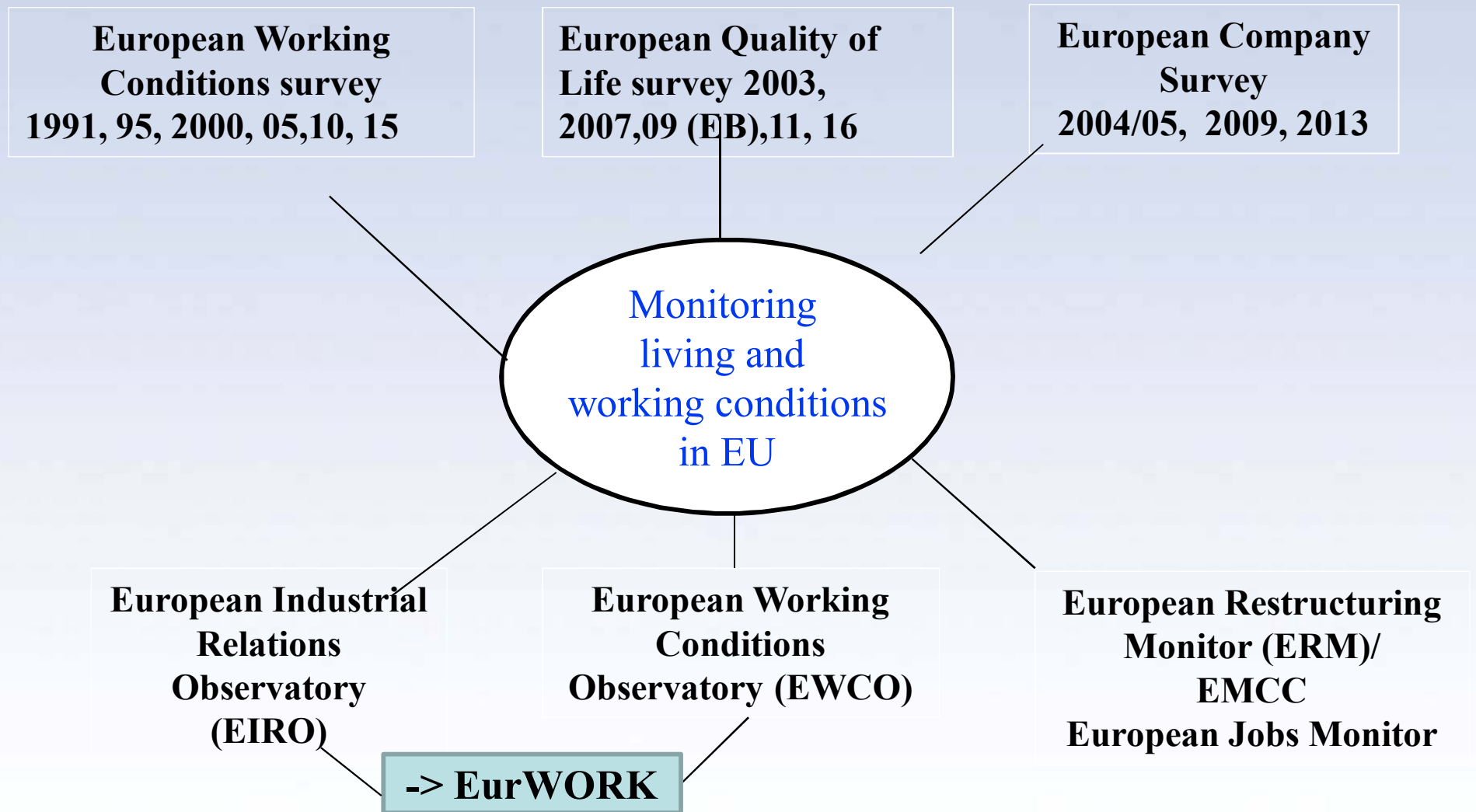
More on www.eurofound.europa.eu
gve@eurofound.europa.eu

Presentation based on analyses of the EWCS:

- Parent-Thirion et al (2012), 5th European Working Conditions Survey: overview report*
- Kummerling, Anxo and Franz (2012), Working Time, Work Life Balance in a Life Course Perspective*
- Smith, Burchell, Rubery, Rafferty, Piasna, Rose and Carter (2014), Work and gender*
- Benach, Vanroelen, Vives, De Witte (2013), quality of employment conditions and employment relations in Europe*
- Van Gyes and Szeker (2013), Impact of the crisis on working conditions, EWCO comparative analytical report*

Dataset available through Essex data archive

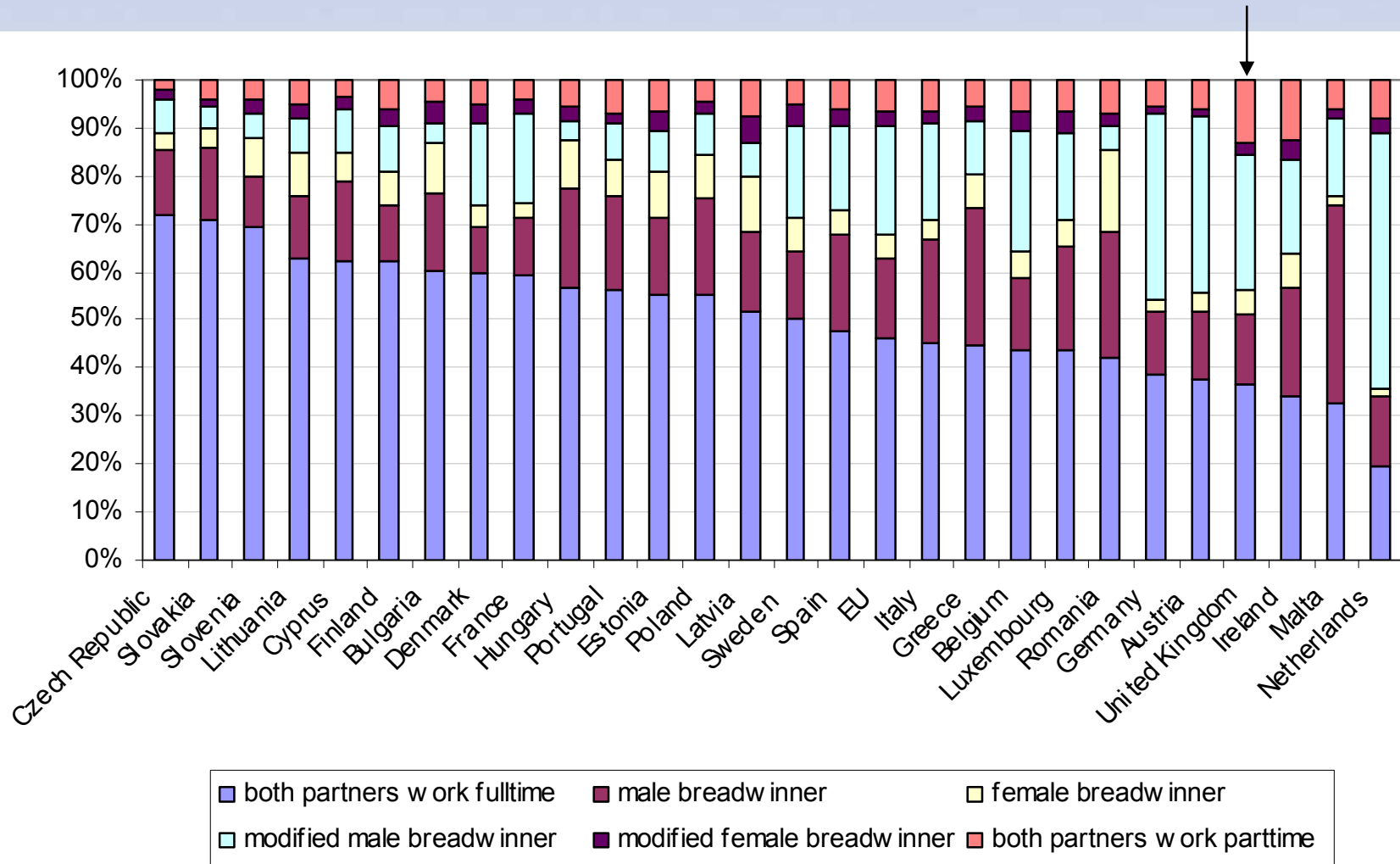
Monitoring activities of the Foundation: Our surveys and observatories (NEO)



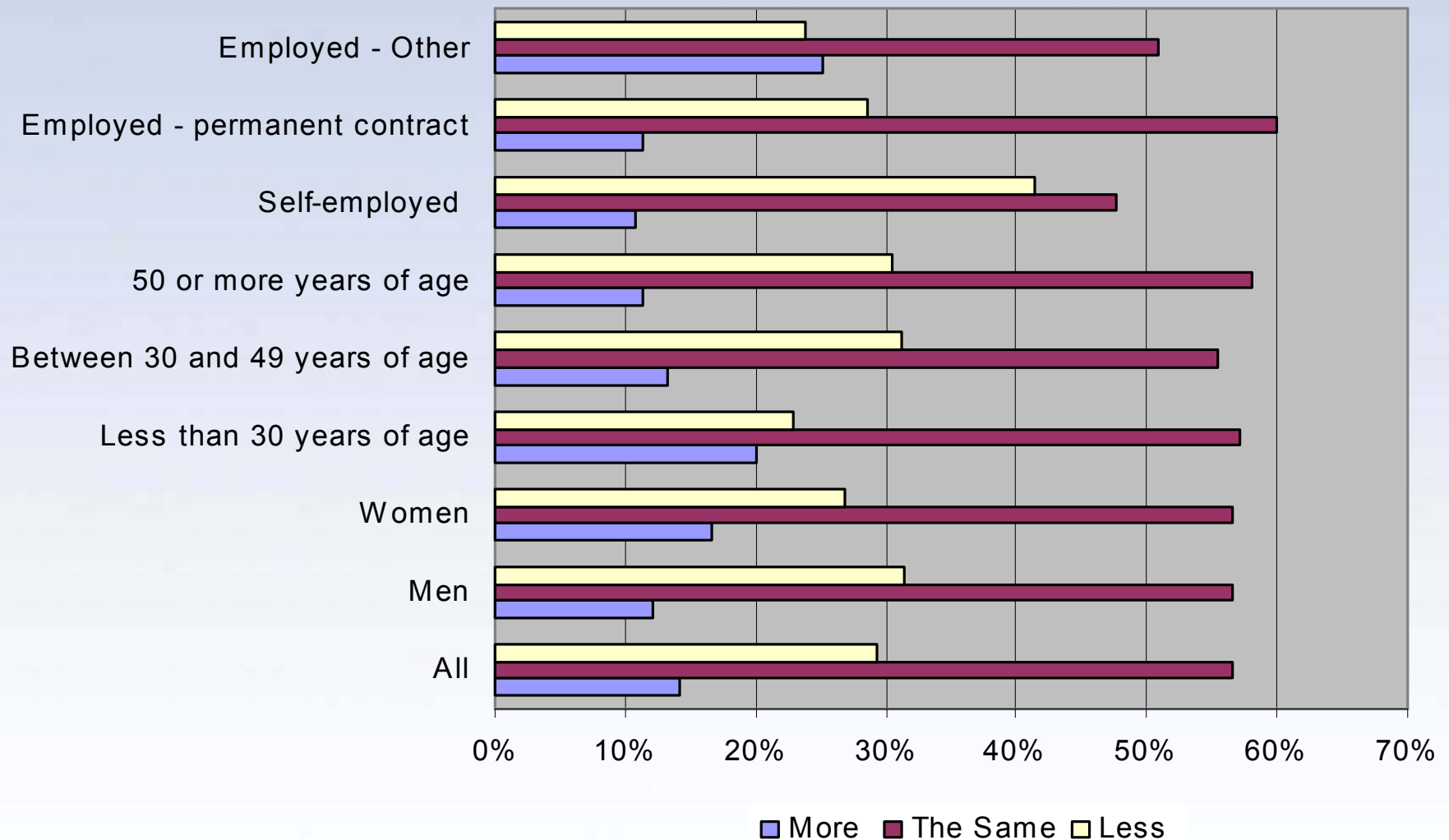


Eurofound

Working hours of the household

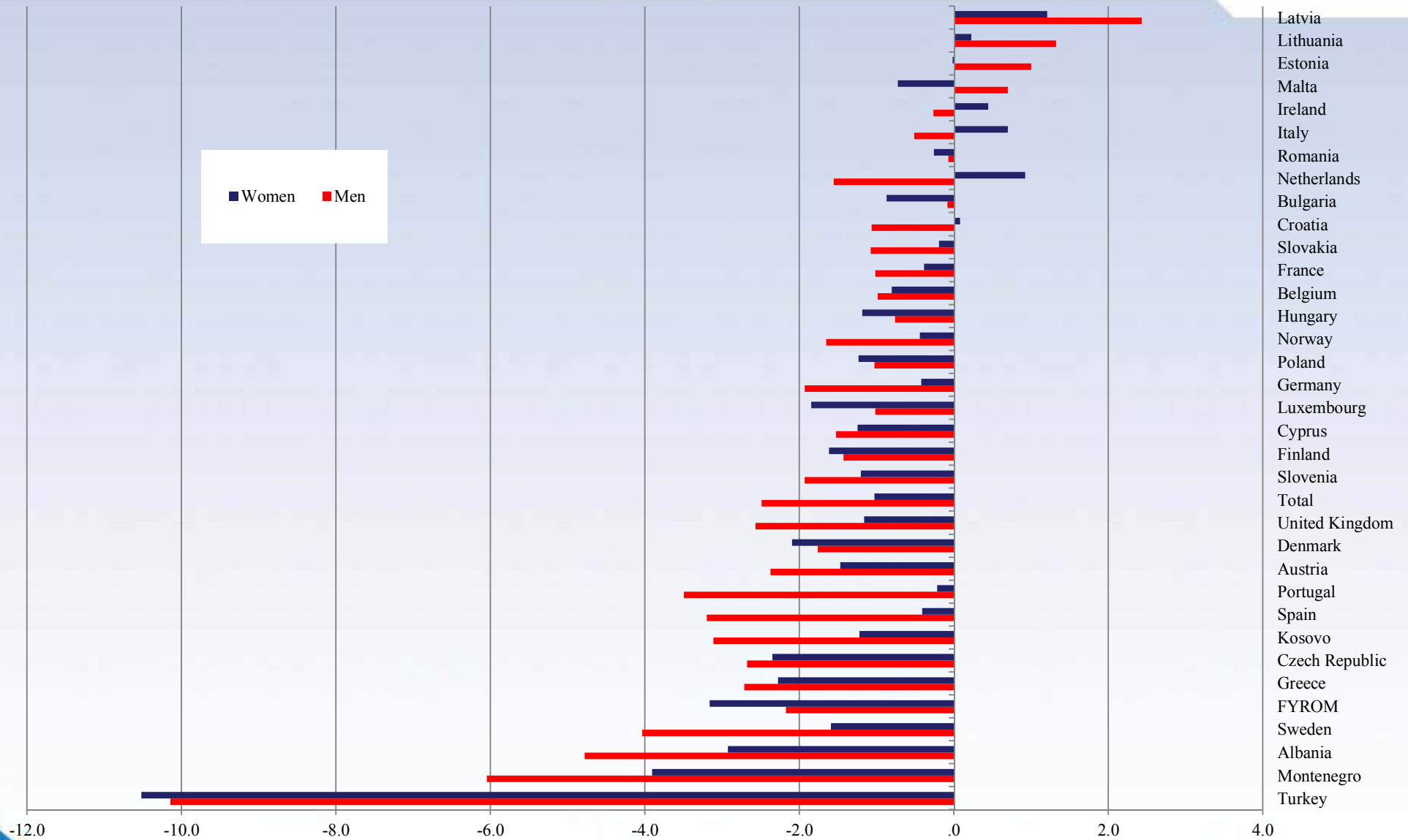


Working hours preferences, by gender, age and employment status, 2010, EU27 (%)





Country-specific differences between employees' actual working hours and preferred working hours

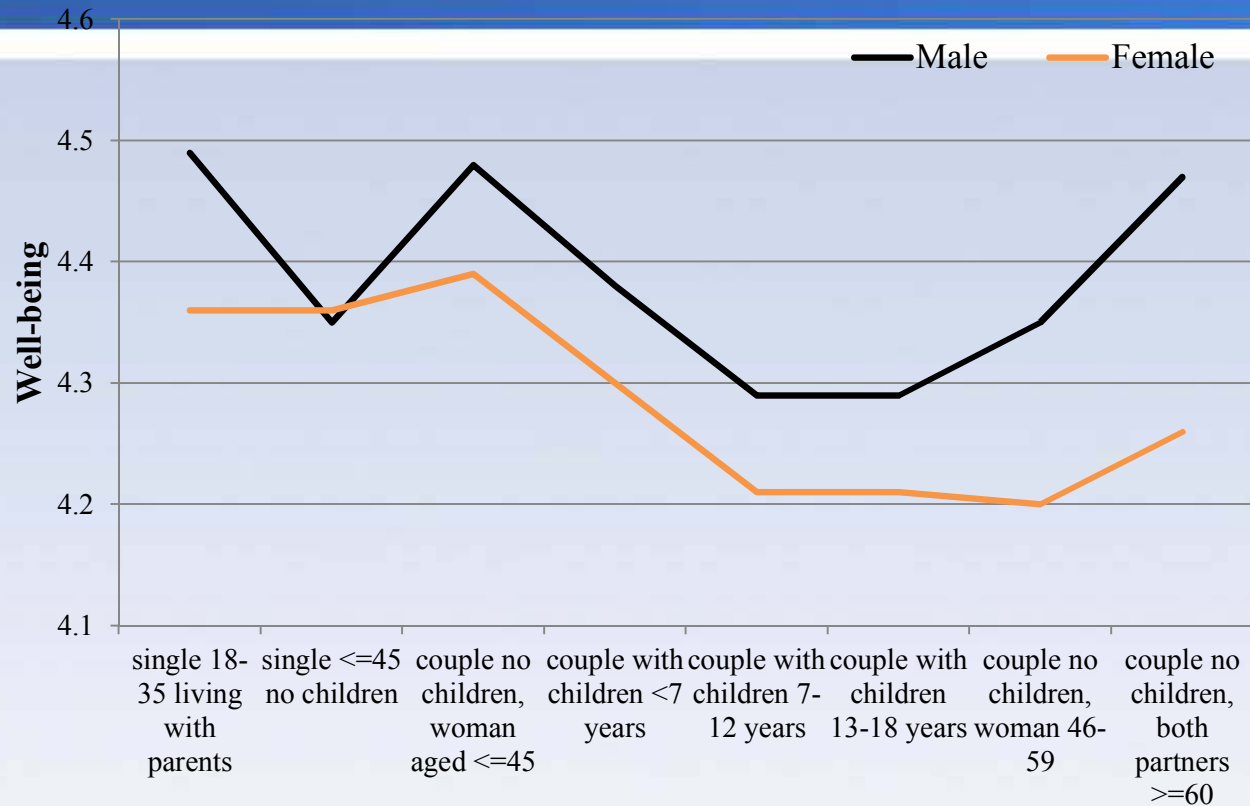


- Analysis of determinants of well-being important to inform policymakers
 - ▶ to improve the mental health of workers & productivity
- Gendered effect of working conditions and life stages on workers' general well-being
- New feature of the 2010 EWCS : questions on general well-being (WHO-5)
- Higher well-being associated with:
 - ▶ white-collar and younger workers;
 - ▶ working in gender-mixed occupations at one's workplace;
 - ▶ jobs with high intrinsic job quality or with good job prospects;
 - ▶ working for a boss of the opposite sex.
- Low well-being for those working 40+ hours/week, with a particularly strong negative effect for women working more than 48 hours/week. Well-being also low for lone workers in their occupation at the workplace.



Eurofound

Well-being across the life stages



- Gender gap in well-being starts small in the early life stages, with increasing male advantage up to the point when children enter the household.
- Women's well-being remains lower than men's for the rest of the life stages, and the gap does not close even when the children have left home.
- Cross-country variation in gender gaps in well-being among working parents