



Developments in collectively agreed working time 2012

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In 2012, average collectively agreed weekly working time in the European Union, including Croatia, stood at 38.1 hours, the same as for the EU27 in 2011. The working week was on average 30 minutes shorter in the pre-2004 EU15 countries and over 1 hour and 30 minutes longer in the new Member States. Agreed normal annual working time averaged nearly 1,712 hours in the European Union as a whole – 1,678 hours in the EU15 and 1,824 hours in the new Member States. Of the three sectors examined, banking recorded the shortest average agreed normal weekly working hours with 37.6 hours, although this represents an increase of 0.2 hours on 2011. In the local government sector the average was 37.8 hours and in metalworking it was 37.9 hours. When collectively agreed paid annual leave entitlements are accounted for, average annual leave stood at 25.3 days across the EU, including Croatia, being slightly higher in the EU15 countries (26.7 days) and considerably lower in the new Member States (20.8 days).

Introduction

This annual report covers a number of aspects of the length of working time in the European Union and Norway in 2012. It is based mainly on contributions from the national correspondents of Eurofound's European Industrial Relations Observatory (EIRO). This edition includes data from Croatia, a Member State of the European Union from 1 July 2013. The report looks specifically at the following issues:

- average weekly working hours as set by collective agreements, both economy-wide and for three specific sectors;
- statutory limits on weekly and daily working time;
- average actual weekly working hours;
- developments regarding flexibility of working time;
- annual leave entitlements, as set by collective agreements and law;
- estimates of average collectively agreed annual working time.

The report provides a general overview of the present status of working time and any recent major developments. The figures provided should, as always, be treated with great caution, and the various notes and explanations always borne in mind. Making international comparisons of the length of working time is difficult in several respects. Comparable data are not collected in all countries, while particular complications include the following:

- the existence of different ways of calculating working time: annual, monthly or weekly standards;
- the fact that working time reductions in some countries have been introduced through extra days off or cuts in annual hours, leaving the normal working week relatively unchanged;
- the increasing use of schemes whereby weekly hours may vary considerably, with an average being maintained over a reference period;
- the treatment of part-time workers;
- the differing roles of collective bargaining and legislation, with legislation having an impact on actual hours in some countries, but acting only to set a maximum 'safety net' in others.

Figures for *normal* weekly working hours are also problematic when comparing working time between countries, as these do not take into account factors such as overtime, the length of annual and other forms of leave, or the use of flexible forms of working time organisation.

This report follows the two previous editions in the method it uses for calculating averages for the groups of EU Member States. The three groups used are the EU28, EU15 and new Member States including Croatia (NMS13). The average figures provided for these country groupings are weighted in order to reflect the relative country sizes in terms of persons aged 15 to 64 who are employed full time, according to Eurostat's Labour Force Survey (EU LFS).

Average collectively agreed weekly hours

Collective bargaining plays an important role in determining the duration of working time in most of the EU28 countries, though to a lesser or sometimes negligible extent in some of the Member States that joined the EU since 2004 (the NMS13). The nature and extent of this role also differs widely across countries, with bargaining at different levels (intersectoral, sectoral, company and so on) playing different roles, and bargaining coverage varying considerably (in general, being higher in the EU15 than in the NMS13). Moreover, the importance of bargaining may also differ greatly among sectors of economic activity and groups of workers. The relationship between bargaining and legislative provisions on working time continues to vary considerably between countries.

Figure 1 depicts the average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the countries where those data exist. In some Member States, such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland and Slovenia, working time is not generally defined through collective bargaining, and therefore they are not represented in the chart. In Bulgaria, although collective bargaining covers working time in parts of the economy, there are no data available for any estimate to be made. In the cases of Croatia, Greece, Hungary and Malta, the estimates assume that most collective agreements replicate the statutory maximum working week of 40 hours. For the majority of countries it is, however, possible to present average agreed hours in 2012. With the very few exceptions mentioned below, there were no major changes in comparison with 2011 (**TN1204022S**). Belgium, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden and the UK were the only countries registering changes between 2011 and 2012. Slovakia continued in a decreasing trend whereas Spain halted an upward trend: both countries registered a fall of 0.1 hours in collectively agreed weekly hours. Sweden and the UK registered an increase of 0.1 hours per week, while Belgium recorded the highest increase, of 0.2 hours per week. All in all, these changes did not affect the estimate for the European Union including Croatia, which remains at 38.1 hours in 2012.

Figure 1: Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours, 2012

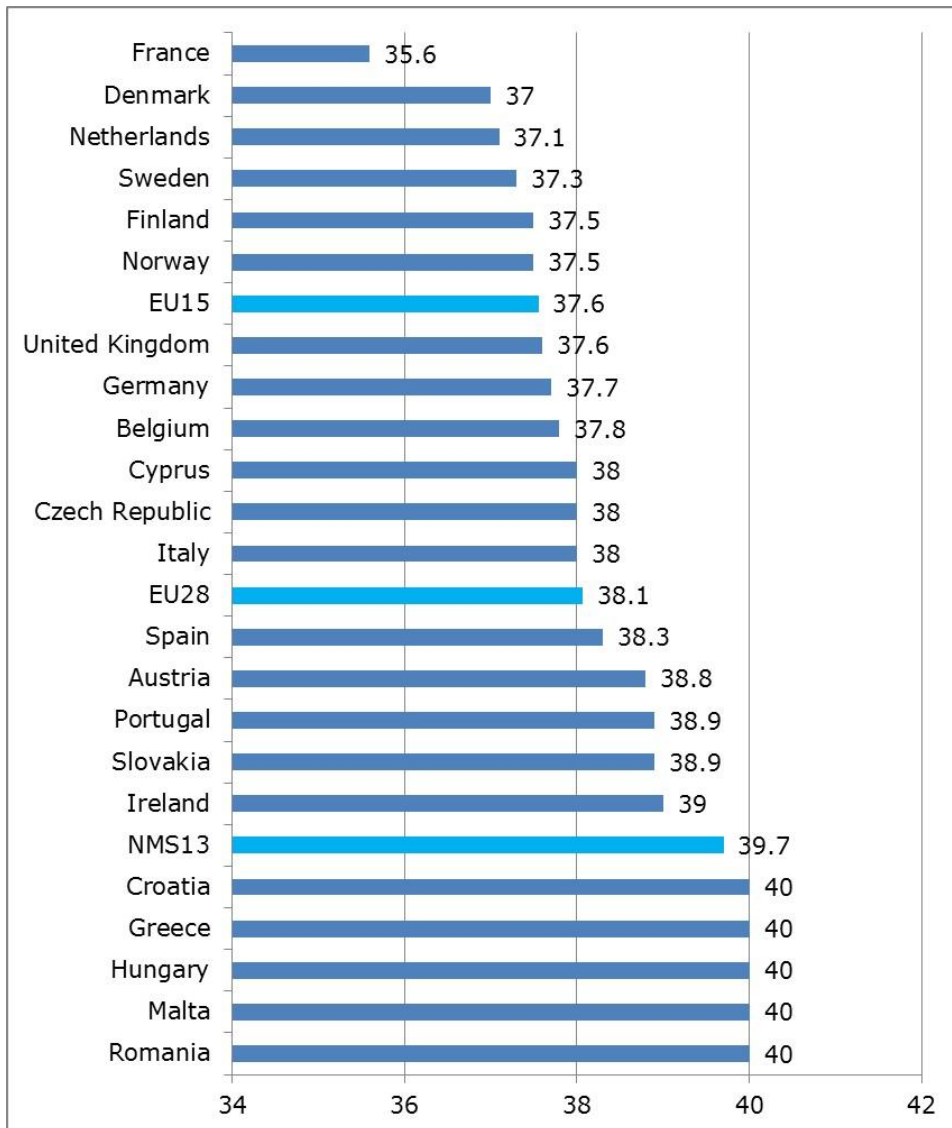


Figure 1: Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours, 2012

Note: The data should be interpreted in conjunction with the notes in Annex 1; EU28, EU15 and NMS13 figures are the authors' own calculations of weighted averages based on relative country sizes in terms of employment (Eurostat, EU LFS, 2012).

Source: EIRO

France remains the country with the shortest average collectively agreed working week, of 35.6 hours. This most likely reflects the effects of the Aubry law establishing a statutory working week of 35 hours since 2000 (FR0001137F). Besides France, the Nordic countries (including Norway) together with the Netherlands, constitute the group of countries registering an average agreed normal working week below the EU15 average of 37.6 hours in 2012.

Collectively agreed weekly hours, by sector

This section looks at the average normal weekly working hours for full-time workers as set by collective bargaining in three sectors selected to represent the manufacturing industry, services and the public sector – metalworking, banking and local government. While the more specific sectoral figures below are probably more accurate than the overall average data given

in the previous section, caution is again advised in their interpretation and use. The notes to each figure must be taken into account for correct interpretations; all caveats noted in the previous section also apply to the sectoral data.

The banking sector recorded the shortest average agreed normal weekly working hours in the EU, with 37.6 hours, followed by the local government sector, with 37.8 hours, and metalworking, with 37.9. The agreed weekly working hours were higher in the NMS13 than in the EU15 in all three sectors. The largest difference can be found in the banking sector, in which the average normal agreed working week in the NMS13 was three hours longer than in the EU15. The difference was 2.1 hours in the metalworking sector and 2.6 hours in local government.

In most of the NMS13 a uniform 40-hour working week, which corresponds in general to the statutory normal week in those countries, was used for the calculation of the averages for the EU28 and NMS13. In Croatia and Malta, the estimates provided indicate that collectively agreed weekly working time replicated the statutory 40 hours in all three sectors. Other countries also had uniform agreed weekly working hours across the three sectors, though these were shorter (37.5 hours in Norway and 37 hours in Denmark). Relatively little variation occurred in Austria, France, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden – countries in which none of the three sectors examined differed by more than two hours. Wider differences in the three sectors analysed here were evident in Belgium, Germany, Italy and Portugal.

Metalworking

Figure 2 shows collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the metalworking industry in 2012, according to the relevant sectoral collective agreements, except where specified in the notes relating to the figure (see Annex 2). There were no major alterations registered between 2011 and 2012. Moreover, there was virtually no change in relation to the 2011 levels in most countries, with the exception of a rise of 0.1 hours in Sweden and the UK and a decline of 0.5 hours in Finland, from 36.6 to 36.1.

Figure 2: Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the metalworking sector, 2012

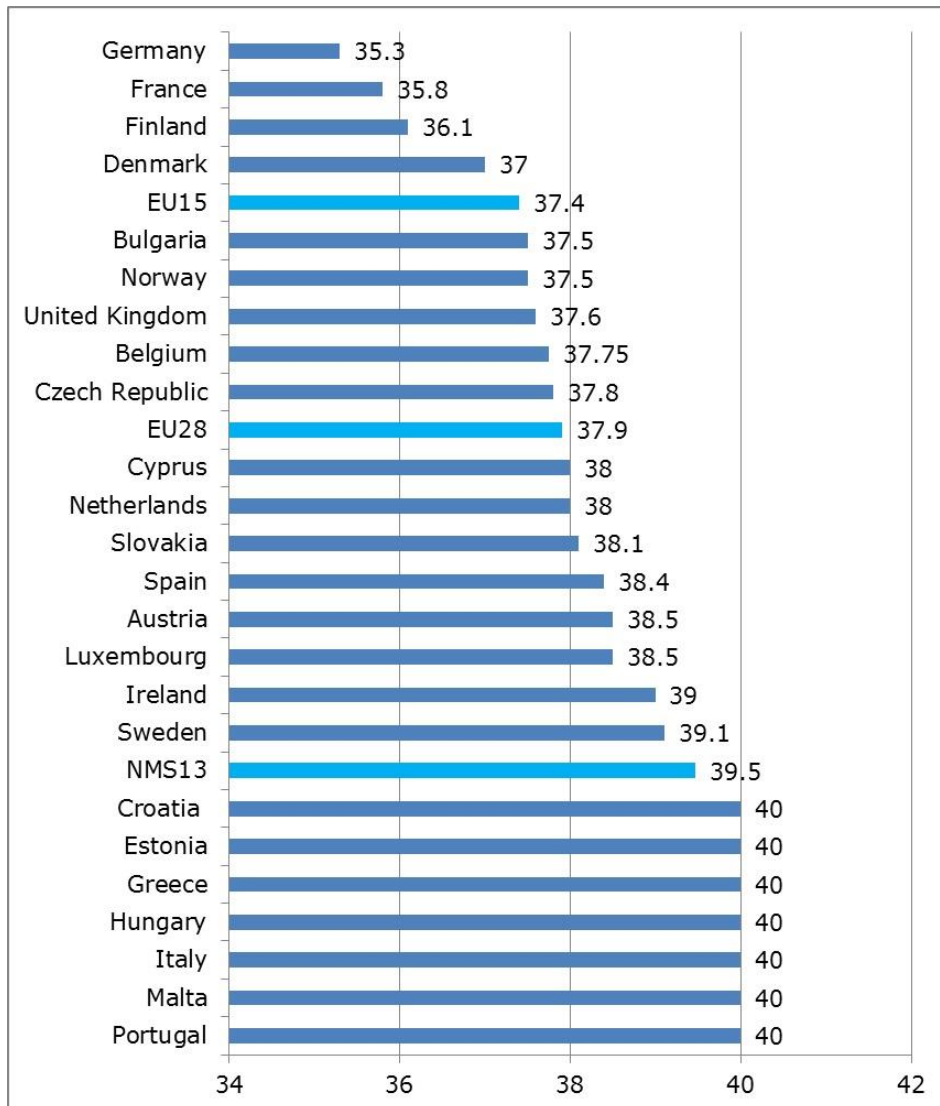


Figure 2: Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the metalworking sector, 2012

Note: The data should be interpreted in conjunction with the notes in Annex 2; EU28, EU15 and NMS13 figures are the authors' own calculations of weighted averages based on relative country sizes in terms of employment (Eurostat, EU LFS, 2012).

Source: EIRO

Across the EU, including Croatia, the average agreed working week in the metalworking sector stood at 37.9 hours, half an hour more per week than the average for the EU15 but clearly lower than the average for the most recent members of the European Union, which stood at 39.5 hours in 2012.

Within the EU15, the longest weekly hours in metalworking in 2012 were found in Greece, Italy and Portugal (40 hours) and the shortest in France (35.8 hours) and Germany (35.3 hours). Working hours in metalworking are markedly higher than the national whole-economy average in Italy, Sweden, Portugal and the Netherlands – respectively 2, 1.8, 1.1, and 0.9 hours more. And they are notably lower in Germany and Finland (2.4 and 1.4 hours less) but also in France (0.2 hours less). Overall, the average agreed working week in

metalworking stood slightly below (-0.2 hours) the whole-economy average for this group of countries.

In the NMS13, average weekly hours in metalworking stood at 39.5 in 2012 – exactly the same as in 2011. In the countries not shown in the chart – Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania and Slovenia – working time in metalworking is, in general, not defined by collective agreements. Within the NMS13 group it is important to note the cases of Bulgaria and the Czech Republic, the only countries in the group with an average agreed weekly working time below the EU28 average, while most of the other NMS13 stand at 40 hours. Cyprus and Slovakia are exceptions, with average collectively agreed weekly working times in metalworking of 38 and 38.1 hours, respectively.

Banking

According to the most relevant available information on sectoral collective agreements, in 2012 the collectively agreed normal working week in the banking sector stood at 37.6 hours in the EU28 (Figure 3). This represents an increase of 0.2 hours compared with 2011 due to increases registered in Spain (1.7 hours more) and the UK (0.2 hours more). Slovakia was the only Member State registering a decrease (-0.1 hours). In the EU as a whole, the average agreed weekly working time in banking was 0.5 hours lower than the overall whole-economy average.

Figure 3: Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the banking sector, 2012

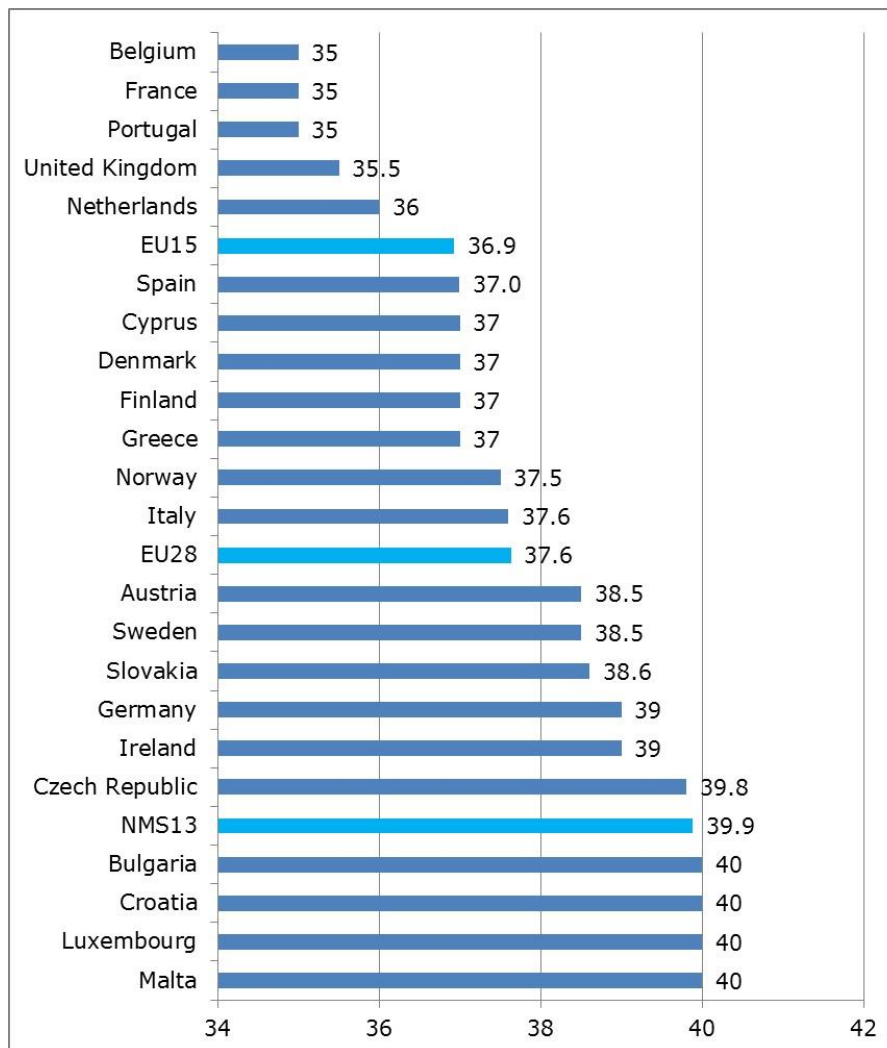


Figure 3: Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the banking sector, 2012

Note: The data should be interpreted in conjunction with the notes in Annex 3; EU28, EU15 and NMS13 figures are the authors' own calculations of weighted averages based on relative country sizes in terms of employment (Eurostat, EU LFS, 2012).

Source: EIRO

In the EU15, average weekly hours in banking stood at 36.9 in 2012, 0.2 hours more than in 2011 and 0.3 more than 2010. The longest agreed weekly hours in banking were found in Luxembourg (40 hours per week), Germany and Ireland (39 hours) and Austria and Sweden (38.5 hours) and the shortest in Belgium, France and Portugal (35 hours). Working hours in banking are markedly higher than the national whole-economy average in Germany and Sweden, but much lower in Portugal, Greece, Belgium, the UK, Spain and the Netherlands (respectively 3.9, 3.0, 2.8, 2.1, 1.3, and 1.1 hours less per week than the relevant whole-economy average). Overall, the average agreed working week in banking is 0.7 hours below the whole-economy average for the EU15 group.

In the NMS13, average weekly hours in banking stood at 39.9 in 2012, registering no change in relation to 2011. The 2012 banking weekly average for the NMS13 was 3 hours above the EU15 average for the sector and 0.2 hours above the whole-economy average for this group

of countries. Cyprus, the Czech Republic and Slovakia were the only NMS13 with average agreed weekly hours in the sector below the NMS13 average. Cyprus, with an average collectively agreed weekly working time for the sector at 37 hours, was the only country from this group in which the figure was below the average figure for the whole EU. In the Czech Republic, agreed weekly hours in banking were 1.8 hours more than the whole-economy national average.

Local government

As in the public administration sector in general, legislation rather than bargaining plays an important part in setting weekly hours for the local government sector in many Member States. There was virtually no change from 2011 in the ‘collectively agreed’ normal weekly hours in the sector in all countries. The exceptions were Slovakia, where the agreed weekly working time decreased by 0.2 hours, and Sweden, where it increased by 0.3 hours.

Across the EU28, the average agreed weekly working time in the local government sector was 37.8 hours in 2012 (Figure 4), the same as in 2011 and about 12 minutes less than the overall whole-economy average.

Figure 4: Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the local government sector, 2012

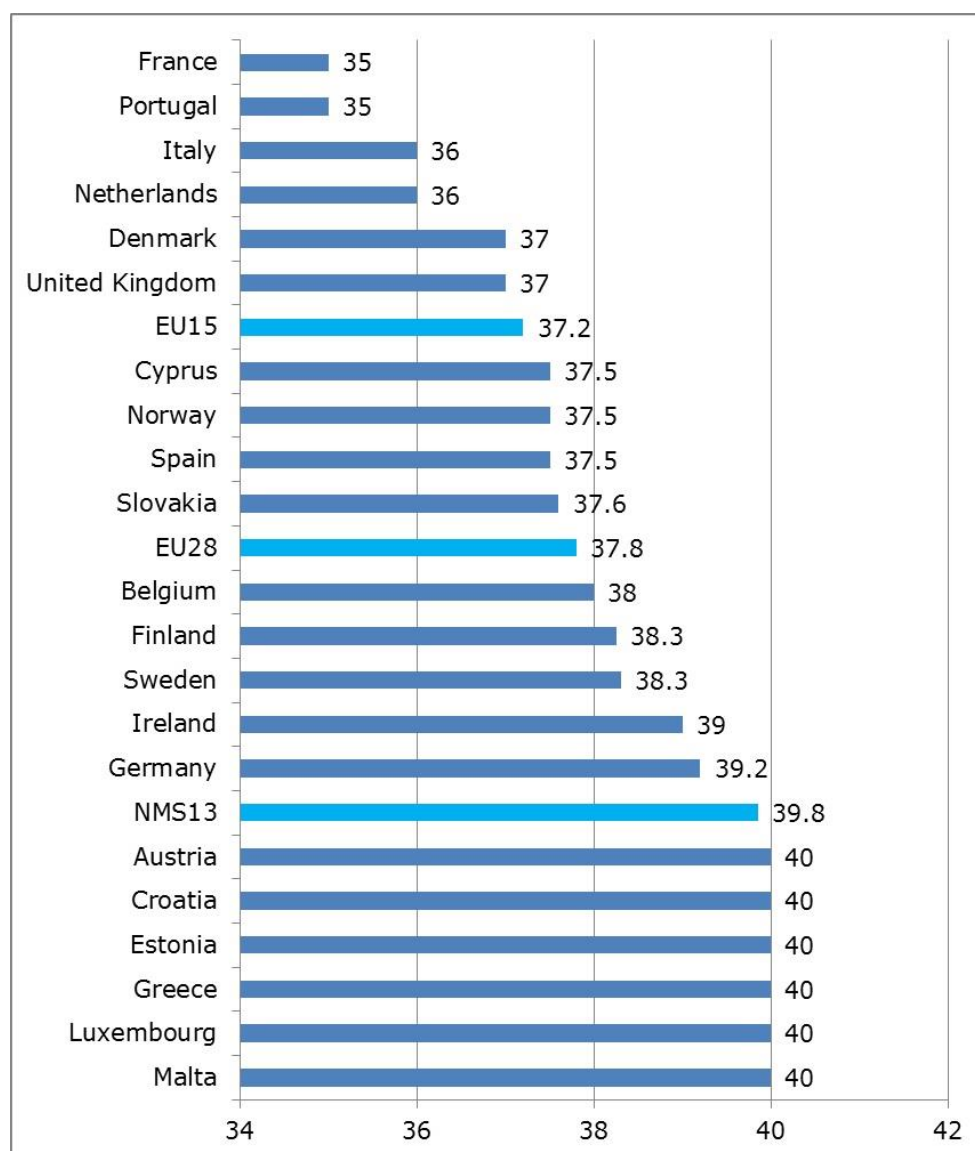


Figure 4: Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the local government sector, 2012

Note: The data should be interpreted in conjunction with the notes in Annex 4; EU28, EU15 and NMS13 figures are the authors' own calculations of weighted averages based on relative country sizes in terms of employment (Eurostat, EU LFS, 2012).

Source: EIRO

In the EU15, average weekly hours in local government stood at 37.2 in 2012 – the same as in 2011. In 2012, the longest weekly hours in the sector were found in Austria, Greece and Luxembourg (40 hours per week), and the shortest in France and Portugal (35 hours) and Italy and the Netherlands (36 hours). Working hours in local government are markedly higher than the national whole-economy average in Germany, Austria, Sweden and Finland, and notably lower in Portugal, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain. Overall, the average agreed working week in local government was 0.4 hours below the whole-economy average.

In the NMS13, average weekly hours in the local government sector stood at 39.8 hours in 2012: 2.6 hours more than the EU15 average. Cyprus and Slovakia were the only countries

where the figures were closer to the average for the EU28. In these two countries, weekly hours in local government were even below the respective whole-economy national averages. Overall, the average agreed working hours in local government in recent Member States were just 0.1 hours above the whole-economy average.

Statutory maximum working time

Collective bargaining on the length of working time in the EU and Norway takes place within the framework of statutory rules on maximum working hours. These must, as a minimum, respect the provisions of the [EU Working Time Directive](#). This includes:

- a provision for an average maximum duration of the working week of 48 hours (over a reference period not exceeding four months);
- a minimum daily rest period of 11 hours;
- a daily hours limit of 8 hours for night workers.

As Figure 5 shows, most countries fall into one of two main groups: those that set their maximum weekly hours at the 48 hours specified in the Working Time Directive, and those that operate a lower limit of 40 hours, which may be extended up to 48 hours or more under certain conditions. Belgium, France and Germany continue to constitute exceptions, as described further below.

Figure 5: Statutory maximum working week, 2012

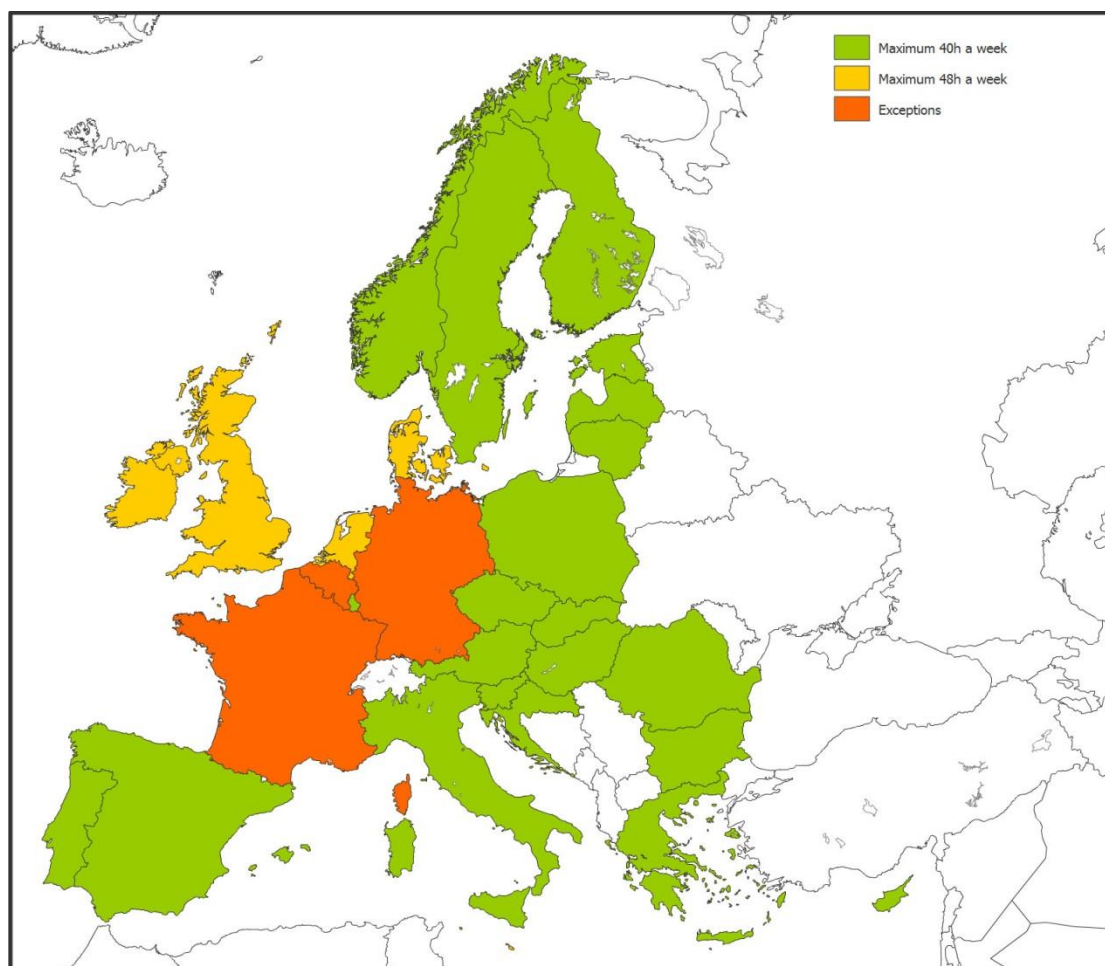


Figure 5: Statutory maximum working week, 2012

Source: EIRO

There is a group of five countries (Denmark, the Netherlands, Ireland, Malta and the UK, shown in yellow in Figure 5) where the statutory 48-hour maximum is in excess of average

collectively agreed weekly working hours (see Figure 1) and of average actual weekly hours (see Figure 7), and appears to operate essentially as a safety net. It should be noted that the 48-hour figure in these cases includes overtime. As permitted by the Working Time Directive, a number of countries allow for individual workers (generally or only in specified sectors) to opt out of the 48-hour weekly maximum (this is the case, for instance, in Malta and the UK).

In the second group of 21 countries (shown in green in Figure 5), the statutory maximum for a normal week of work is much closer to average agreed or actual weekly hours and is identical to agreed hours in some cases, indicating a more active role for the law in governing working time. However, overtime is not included in this figure, and the ‘maximum’ may function in practice as a statutory normal working week. Such statutory working weeks exist in some countries, with a 48-hour maximum in most of the countries. The exceptions are Latvia, where only a minimum of 42 consecutive hours of weekly rest period is established within a seven-day period, and Austria, Sweden and Hungary, where the established maximums are, respectively, 50, 52 and 60 hours per week.

The limits referred to may be exceeded in many countries where working time flexibility schemes allow weekly hours to be varied around an average over a reference period, as permitted by the Working Time Directive. Weekly maximum working time under such hours-averaging schemes may itself be subject to a ceiling, such as 60 hours. In the Netherlands, for example, weekly working time – including overtime – may not exceed 48 hours on average over a 16-week reference period, or 55 hours per week on average over a 4-week reference period, unless otherwise agreed by the employer and trade union or works council, subject to an absolute weekly limit of 60 hours. Similarly, in Portugal, the weekly limit of 40 hours may be periodically extended to 60 hours, although it must not exceed a bi-monthly average of 50 hours a week and an annual average of 40 hours a week. In Croatia, Article 45 of the Labour Act determines that overtime work may amount to 8 hours per week, 32 hours per month and 180 hours per year, but in cases of *force majeure*, unexpected increase of work and other cases of urgency that limit can be surpassed.

The complexity of the European picture relating to weekly working time, overtime and variable working time is perhaps best illustrated by the exceptions of Belgium, France and Germany (shown in orange in Figure 5). Whereas in France the working week can extend from 35 hours up to a maximum of 48 hours (including overtime), in Belgium the rule is 38 hours as the lower limit but with the particularity that work carried out in excess of 40 hours is considered as overtime and the absolute maximum is 50 hours per week. In the German case, the statutory maximum is set for a working day rather than a week.

All the countries examined also have a form of statutory maximum working day, as set out in Figure 6.

Figure 6: Statutory maximum working day (in hours), 2012

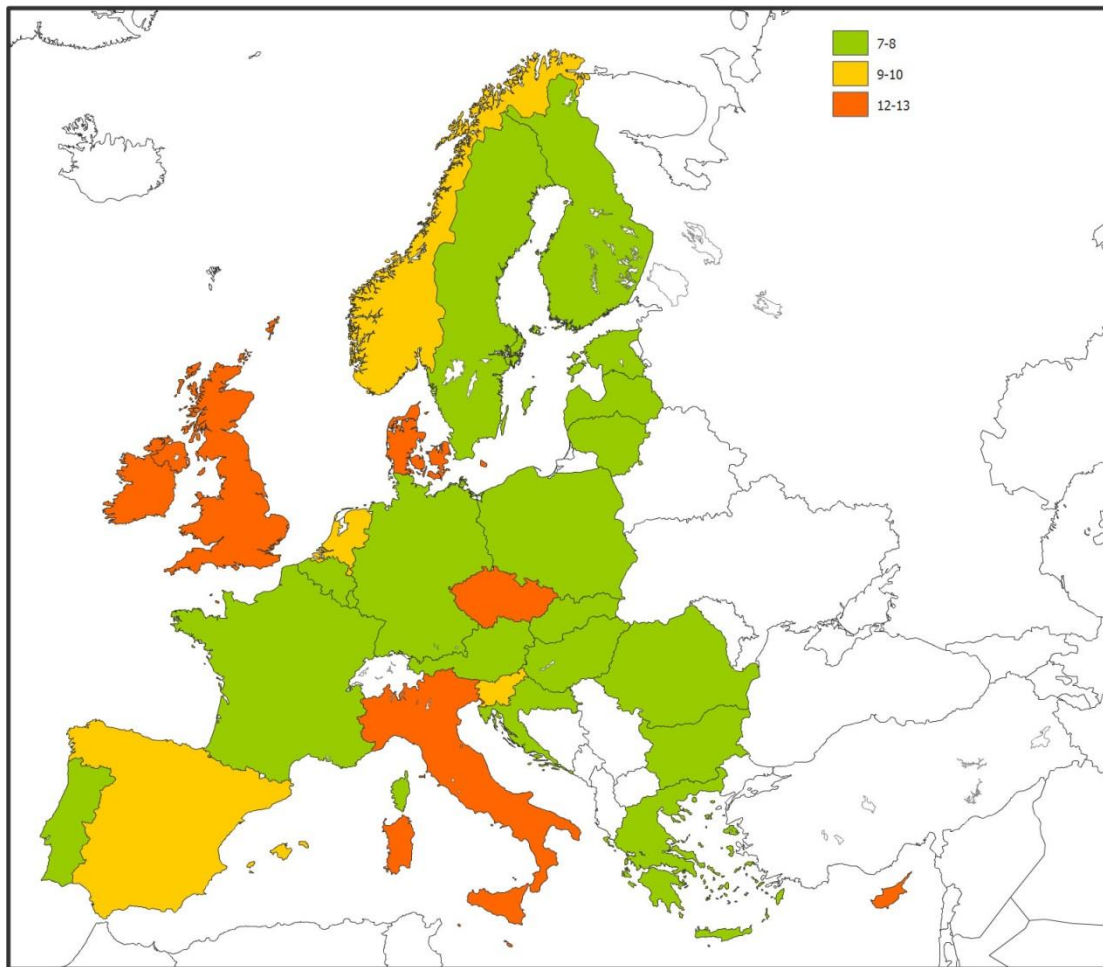


Figure 6: Statutory maximum working day (in hours), 2012

Source: EIRO

In Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland, Italy and the UK there is no explicit maximum working day, but in most circumstances a 13-hour maximum can be inferred from the application of the Working Time Directive's minimum 11-hour daily rest period. Maximum daily hours vary more across Europe than does the weekly maximum:

- Cyprus, Denmark, Ireland, Italy and the UK stipulate 13 hours;
- Malta stipulates 12.5 hours;
- the Czech Republic stipulates 12 hours, after an amendment of the Labour Code (it used to be 9 hours);
- Slovenia stipulates 10 hours;
- the Netherlands, Norway and Spain stipulate 9 hours;
- France stipulates 7 hours;
- the remaining 17 countries stipulate 8 hours.

In most countries, daily hours may often be longer under certain conditions, such as working time flexibility schemes, and as the following examples show.

- In Belgium, the maximum number of hours per working day (including overtime) depends on the specific case or sector and can go up to 9, 10, 11 or 12 hours. In some cases, this requires a preliminary agreement (by decree or by the in-company trade union's delegation), but in other cases no agreement is needed.

- In Bulgaria, the working day may be extended from 8 to 10 hours, but only for a total of 60 working days a year and for not more than 20 consecutive working days.
- In the Czech Republic, a daily maximum for working hours including overtime work is not stipulated either by the Labour Code or by any other regulation. The overtime-work regulation is based on the stipulated weekly working hours.
- In France, derogations to the statutory maximum working day of 10 hours can be requested from the Labour Inspectorate.
- In Germany, a working day may be extended to 10 hours as long as an 8-hour average is maintained over a 24-week or 6-month reference period.
- In Croatia and Latvia, the length of a rest within a period of 24 hours, in general, shall not be less than 12 consecutive hours, implying a daily maximum of 12 working hours.

Actual weekly working hours

In order to obtain a more accurate picture of how many hours workers really work in a given week, it is necessary to turn to data on actual weekly hours worked. These are typically measured in labour force surveys, which include factors such as overtime and absence. Figure 7 provides harmonised EU LFS data on the ‘average number of actual weekly hours of work in the main job’ of full-time employees in 2012. These take in all hours, including extra hours, whether paid or not.

Figure 7: Average number of actual weekly hours of work in main job, full-time employees, 2012

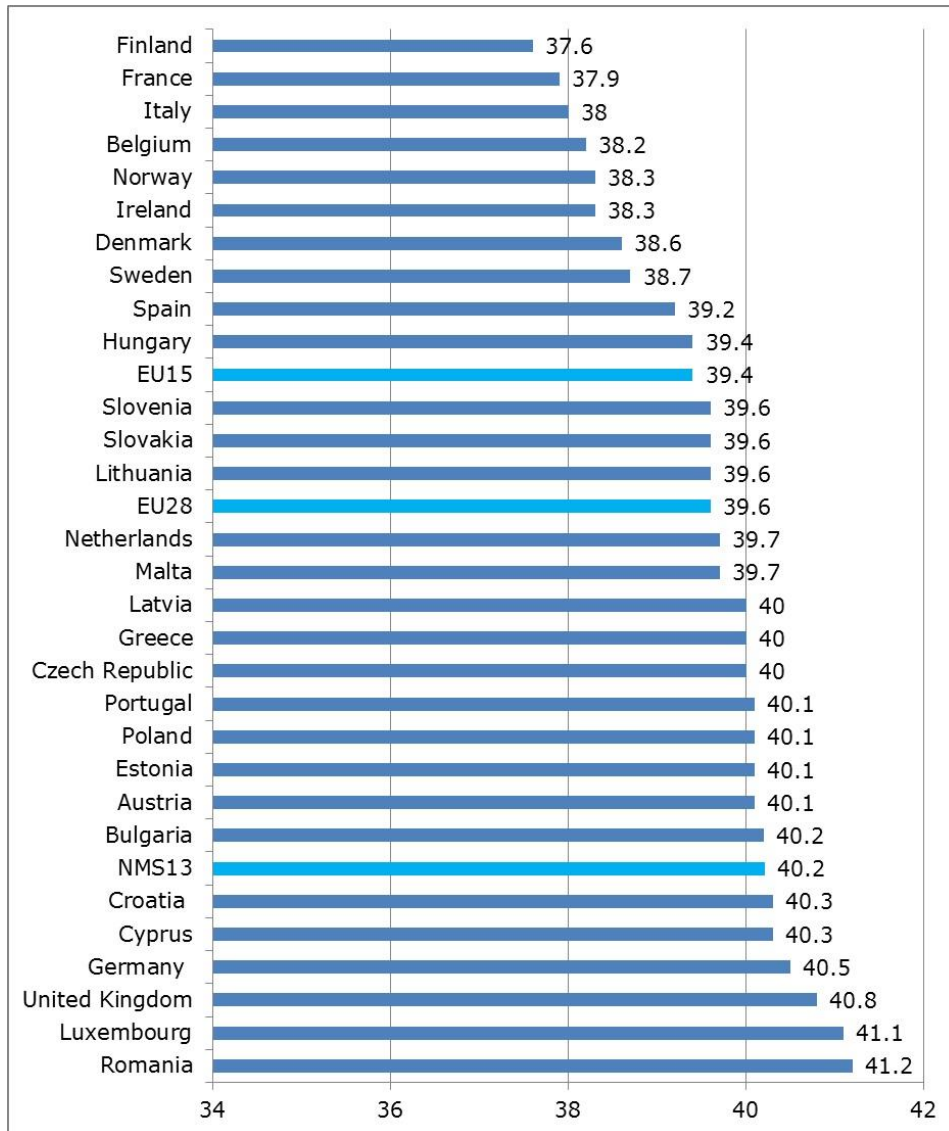


Figure 7: Average number of actual weekly hours of work in main job, full-time employees, 2012

Notes: According to Eurostat, the ‘actual hours worked’ in the reference week are the hours the person spent in work activities during that week. Work activities should include production activities, ancillary activities, short breaks, and education and training necessary for successfully carrying out the job tasks. Actual hours worked exclude travel time between home and the place of work, main meal breaks, absences from work within the working period for personal reasons, and education and training hours not necessary for carrying out the job tasks. The NMS13 average was calculated by the authors.

Source: Eurostat, EU LFS, 2012

In the EU, full-time employees in Romania reported the longest actual weekly hours in their main jobs in 2012 – 41.2 hours, or 0.1 hours less than in 2011. They were followed by employees in Luxembourg (41.1 hours), the UK (40.8 hours), Germany (40.5 hours), Croatia and Cyprus (both 40.3 hours), and Bulgaria (40.2 hours). Employees in Finland worked the

shortest hours (37.6). This was 3.6 hours less than their counterparts in Romania, or over 4.5 weeks of work in Romania in a full year.

Twelve of the 13 NMS registered actual weekly working hours at or above the EU28 average of 39.6 hours, compared with only 7 of the EU15 nations. Of the NMS13, only Hungary had an actual working week that was slightly shorter than the EU28 average (39.4 hours). In the EU15, the longest actual full-time hours were worked in Luxembourg (41.1), the UK (40.8) and Germany (40.5) and the shortest in Finland (37.6), France (37.9) and Italy (38).

Actual weekly hours worked by full-time employees were longer than the average normal collectively agreed working week in 21 of the 29 countries analysed here (see also Figure 1). The extent to which the average actual working week exceeded the agreed normal week varies across the European Union, according to the following patterns:

- by less than an hour in Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Norway, Poland, Slovakia and Spain;
- by between one and two hours in Austria, Denmark, Luxembourg, Portugal, Romania and Sweden;
- by between two and three hours in the Czech Republic, Cyprus, France, Germany and the Netherlands;
- by over three hours in the UK.

In the EU28, the actual working week was 39.6 hours in 2012, 0.1 hours less than in 2011; this was 1 hour and 30 minutes more than the average agreed working hours. In the EU15, the working week was 39.4 hours, 1 hour and 45 minutes longer than the agreed hours. In the NMS13, the working week was 40.2 hours, 30 minutes longer than the average agreed working hours.

The annual figures for actual weekly working hours in the EU from 2006 to 2012 indicate that whereas the EU15 reversed the upward development registered in 2010 and 2011, the NMS13 continued the downward trend and reached a record minimum in 2012 of 40.2 hours (Figure 8).

Figure 8: Actual weekly working hours in the European Union, 2006–2012

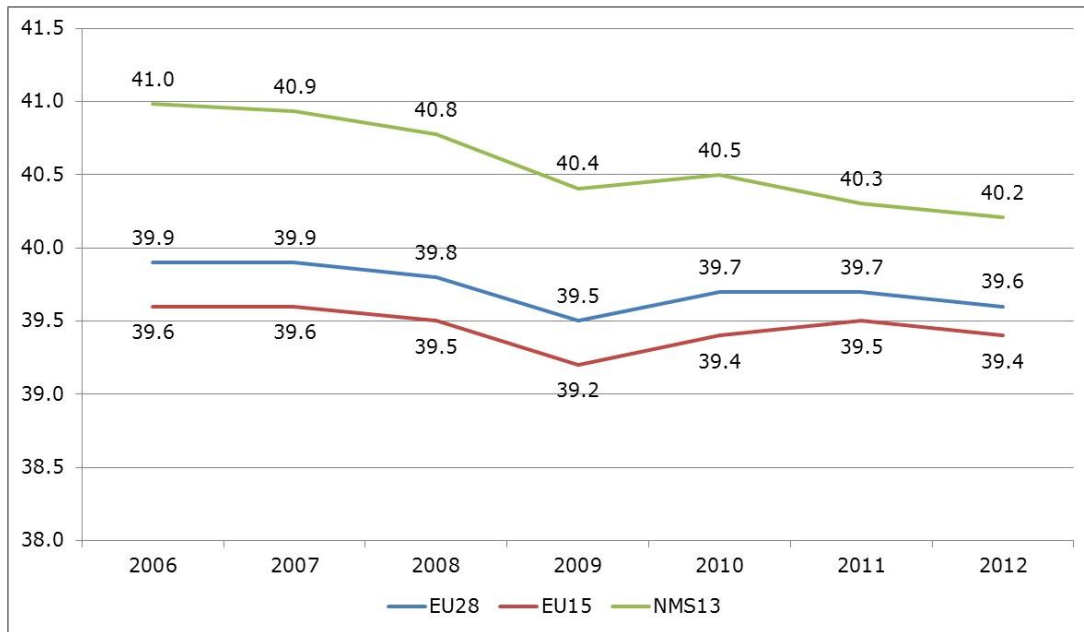


Figure 8: Actual weekly working hours in the European Union, 2006–2012

Note: Average number of actual weekly hours of work in main job, full-time employees; the NMS13 average was calculated by EIRO.

Source: Eurostat, EU LFS

In both the EU15 and the NMS13, the actual working week was 0.1 hours shorter than in 2011. However, the variation between 2011 and 2012 is considerable across the Member States. It is possible to distinguish three groups of countries:

- In Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden, actual working hours decreased in 2012 (by between 0.1 and 0.3 hours). In Belgium, Croatia and Estonia, there was a decrease of 0.4 hours and in Hungary of 0.6 hours.
- Latvia, the Netherlands, Slovakia and Norway did not register any changes.
- Greece, Ireland, Malta and Portugal registered very modest increases of 0.1 hours. Cyprus, Luxembourg and the UK registered the most significant changes in 2012: full-time employees actually worked on average 0.5, 0.4 and 0.3 hours, respectively, more per week than they did in 2011.

In 2012, actual weekly hours worked by male full-time employees in their main jobs continued to exceed those of their female counterparts in all Member States, including Croatia. The same happened in Norway. Across the EU28, men worked on average 2 hours more than women. The gap is wider in the EU15 than in the NMS13. In the EU15, men worked 2.3 hours more per week than women; by contrast, in the NMS13, men worked around 1 hour and 30 minutes more than women. Again, these averages conceal more stark national situations: men's actual weekly hours exceeded women's by 3 hours or more in Ireland, the UK and Italy (3.6, 3.4 and 3 hours, respectively), by less than 1 hour in Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, and by less than 20 minutes in Bulgaria.

Annual leave

An important factor in the overall length of working time is the paid annual leave to which workers are generally entitled. According to the Working Time Directive, 'Member States shall take the measures necessary to ensure that every worker is entitled to paid annual leave

of at least four weeks’, which ‘may not be replaced by an allowance in lieu’. All 28 countries studied have a statutory minimum period of paid annual leave, as set out in Figure 9. In the figure, the leave is expressed in days and harmonised on the basis of a five-day working week. The number of days represents only the basic entitlement, since entitlement may increase with length of service, for example. The majority of countries, 19 out of 28, have a 20-day minimum entitlement as laid down in the Working Time Directive. This group includes Belgium, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK, as well as all the NMS13 except Malta (24 days). Six countries have a 25-day minimum – Austria, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg and Sweden – while the entitlement is 22 days in Portugal and Spain, and 21 in Norway. In Portugal, the extension to 25 days in compensation for low absenteeism was abolished by the third revision of the Labour Code, in June 2012. The UK increased its statutory entitlement from 20 to 28 days over the period 2007–2009. However, this includes eight public holidays, and the increase was designed to end some employers’ practice of counting those days as part of workers’ statutory entitlement. As a result, the actual UK statutory annual leave entitlement might perhaps more properly be considered to be 20 days.

Figure 9: Statutory minimum annual paid leave (in days), 2012

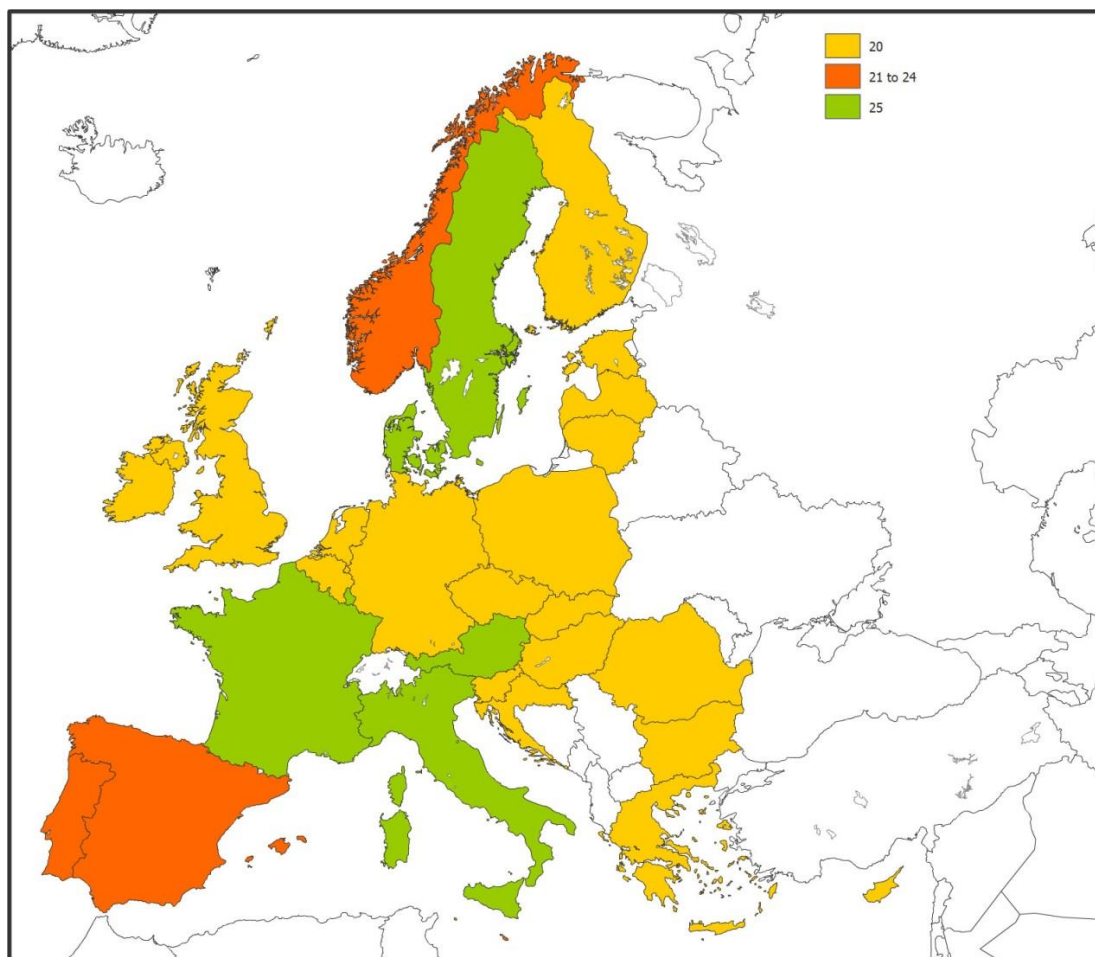


Figure 9: Statutory minimum annual paid leave (in days), 2012

Note: The figure should be read in conjunction with the notes in Annex 5.

Source: EIRO

The statutory annual paid leave is in many cases just the basis upon which workers’ leave entitlement is defined. The total number of annual leave days may depend on the type of occupation performed, years of service or the sector of economic activity, and in many cases is part of collective agreements. However, collectively agreed annual leave is an aspect about

which data can be difficult or even impossible to find. Whereas in some countries no statistics are available, in others collectively agreed rules on leave entitlements are too complex to enable even a rough estimate to be produced.

In Belgium, for example, sectoral agreements may provide for a general addition of up to 5 days to the statutory minimum annual paid leave of 20 days. Such agreements may also provide for additional days of leave after a certain period of service – 1 extra day after 10 years' service, for instance. Further additional days of leave may also be given as compensation for workers with a normal weekly working time above the sectoral norm.

In Germany, according to the WSI Collective Bargaining Archive, the average agreed annual paid leave is 30 days, considerably more than the 20 days for a 5-day week of work (or the 24 days of leave corresponding to a 6-day week). In Slovakia, data from the ISPP (Information System on Working Conditions) indicate that, in 2012, 5.4 working days over the statutory minimum of 20 days had been agreed in a small number of surveyed companies.

In other countries for which it was possible to obtain estimates of agreed annual paid leave – the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands – these estimates amounted to 5 days over the national statutory minimum. In the UK the average agreed annual leave is 4.7 days over statutory minimum, while in Ireland and Norway it is 4 days more. In Romania, the difference is just 1 day.

In Estonia, collective agreements only cover a small part of the total workforce, but there is no exact information of the number of agreements establishing a different annual paid leave from the statutory minimum of 20 days.

Annual working time

In order to arrive at a crude annual estimate for collectively agreed annual normal working time in all countries for 2012, the figures are taken for the average collectively agreed normal weekly hours (see Figure 1), and a 5-day working week throughout the 52 weeks of the year has been assumed.

From this total annual figure, the average collectively agreed annual paid leave is subtracted or, where no data are available on this point, the minimum statutory annual leave (see Figure 9) is subtracted. As noted above, in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Slovakia and the UK, the average agreed leave is higher than the statutory minimum. Use of the statutory minimum leave in calculating collectively agreed annual normal working time thus makes the total figure rather higher than it might actually be, rendering the estimates for these countries particularly crude.

The number of annual public holidays is also subtracted (excluding those falling on Sundays). Where there are varying numbers of regional public holidays (as in Germany), an attempt has been made to give a mid-range figure. It should also be noted that additional holidays may be observed locally or on the basis of collective agreements or custom, while the number of public holidays may vary from year to year, especially in countries that do not award a substitute holiday when a public holiday falls at the weekend. It must be noted that these variations are the main source of year-on-year changes in annual hours in many countries.

The resulting annual figures do not, of course, take into account factors such as overtime working, other forms of time off and leave, or exceptional reductions of normal working time such as short-time working. They are only very rough estimates, but they allow some broad observations to be made (see Table 1).

In 2012, the average collectively agreed annual normal working time was approximately 1,712 hours in the EU28, 1,678 hours in the EU15, and 1,824 hours in the NMS13. Workers in the NMS13 thus worked, on average, 146 hours longer than their counterparts in the EU15 – the equivalent of over three and a-half working weeks. The Czech Republic is the only country in the NMS13 with an average agreed annual working time near the average for the EU28. Overall, the EU's longest hours were worked in Estonia, closely followed by Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, while the shortest were worked in France, Denmark, Germany, Italy and Sweden. In 2012, employees in Estonia had to work 282 hours more on

average than their counterparts in France – equivalent to 7 weeks of work in Estonia (Figure 10).

Figure 10: Average collectively agreed normal annual working time (hours), 2012

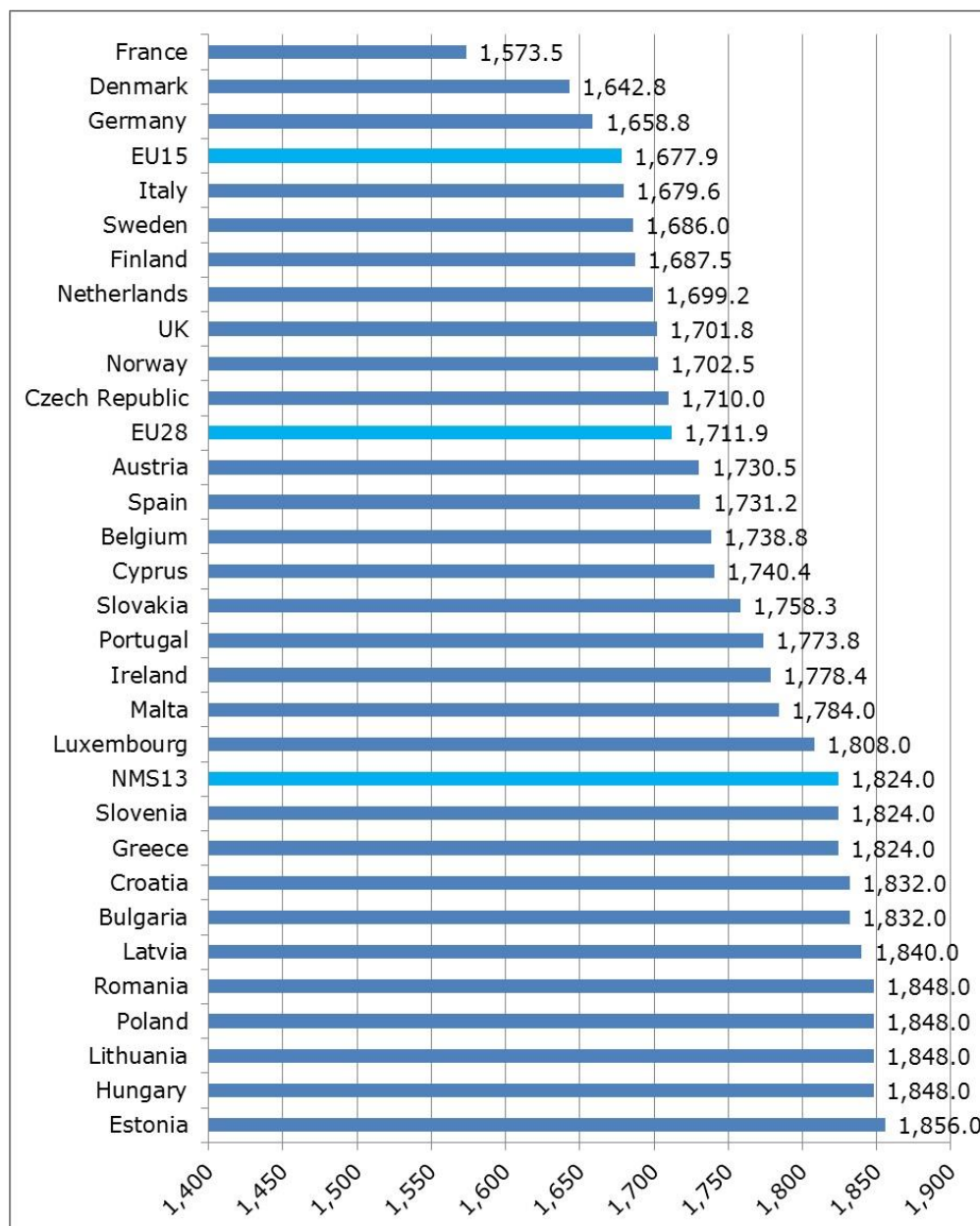


Figure 10: Average collectively agreed normal annual working time (hours), 2012

Source: EIRO

Table 1 shows details of the calculation of the average collectively agreed normal annual working time. It shows that the number of public holidays in 2012 (excluding those falling on Sundays) varied from a minimum of 6 in the Netherlands up to 14 in Slovakia. The average number of public holidays in the EU28 was 9.8, with the NMS13 having on average fewer days (9.5 days) than the EU15 (9.9 days).

The combined total of agreed annual leave and public holidays in the EU varied from 40 days in Germany to 28 days in Estonia – a difference of over 2 working weeks. Other notably high-leave countries in 2012 included France and Italy (with 39 leave days in total), while other notably low-leave countries included Hungary, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, with 29 days.

The average figure for the EU28 was 35.1 days – 36.6 days in the EU15 and 30.3 days in the NMS13.

Looking at the ranking of the 29 countries in terms of the length of their agreed working hours, the countries with the longest and shortest weekly hours are generally also those with the longest and shortest annual hours. However, the annual perspective results in rather different rankings for some countries than those provided by the figures for weekly hours. Some countries, such as Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Italy and Spain, have a relatively lower position in the ‘ranking’ for normal annual hours than in the table for normal weekly hours (in other words, their hours are shorter if counted annually) because of the effects of relatively long annual leave and/or a relatively high number of public holidays. Conversely, other countries are higher in the table for normal annual hours than in the table for normal weekly hours because of the effects of a relatively low number of public holidays and/or relatively limited annual leave. Countries in this category include Belgium, the Netherlands, Norway and the UK; in Belgium, however, the annual leave figures used are for minimum statutory leave due to an absence of data on agreed leave.

Table 1: Average collectively agreed normal annual working time, 2012

	A	B	C	D	E	F
Country	Weekly hours	Gross annual hours (A x 52)	Annual leave (days)	Public holidays (days)**	All leave (C + D) expressed in hours	Annual hours (B - E)
Estonia	40	2,080	20*	8	224	1,856
Hungary	40	2,080	20*	9	232	1,848
Lithuania	40	2,080	20*	9	232	1,848
Poland	40	2,080	20*	9	232	1,848
Romania	40	2,080	21*	8	232	1,848
Latvia	40	2,080	20*	10	240	1,840
Bulgaria	40	2,080	20*	11	248	1,832
Croatia	40	2,080	20*	11	248	1,832
Greece	40	2,080	23*	9	256	1,824
Slovenia	40	2,080	20*	12	256	1,824
Luxembourg	40	2,080	25	9	272	1,808
Malta	40	2,080	24*	13	296	1,784
Ireland	39	2,028	24	8	249.6	1,778.4
Portugal	38.9	2,022.8	22*	10	248.96	1,773.84
Slovakia	38.9	2,022.8	20	14	264.52	1,758.28
Cyprus	38	1,976	20*	11	235.6	1,740.4
Belgium	37.8	1,965.6	20*	10	226.8	1,738.8
Spain	38.3	1,991.6	22*	12	260.44	1,731.16
Austria	38.8	2,017.6	25*	12	287.12	1,730.48
Czech Republic	38	1,976	25	10	266	1,710
Norway	37.5	1,950	25	8	247.5	1,702.5

UK	37.6	1,955.2	24.7	9	253.424	1,701.776
Netherlands	37.1	1,929.2	25	6	230.02	1,699.18
Finland	37.5	1,950	25	10	262.5	1,687.5
Sweden	37.3	1,939.6	25*	9	253.64	1,685.96
Italy	38	1,976	28*	11	296.4	1,679.6
Germany	37.7	1,960.4	30	10	301.6	1,658.8
Denmark	37	1,924	30	8	281.2	1,642.8
France	35.6	1,851.2	30*	9	277.68	1,573.52
EU28	38.1	1,979.1	25.3	9.8	267.3	1,711.9
EU15	37.6	1,952.8	26.7	9.9	275.0	1,677.9
NMS13	39.7	2,064.3	20.8	9.5	240.3	1,824.0

*Note: * statutory minimum paid annual leave; ** public holidays falling on Sundays are subtracted.*

Source: EIRO

Annexes

Annex 1

Back to Figure 1

Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours

The data in Figure 1 should be read in conjunction with the following notes.

Austria – Estimated on the basis of the most important collective agreements, which in general provide for 38.5 to 39 hours a week.

Belgium – The figure is an estimate calculated by the [Federal Public Service for Employment, Labour and Social Dialogue](#). The calculation takes into account (only) the provisions of sectoral collective agreements in the private sector. These agreements cover a very high proportion of the private sector, but not all employees. For example, the company agreements of state enterprises, such as railways or postal services, are not included. These sector agreements can furthermore be amended by company agreements (such as working time reduction or alternative working time regimes). It is also important to note that managerial staff (*kaderleden/cadres*) are generally not bound by Belgian working time rules and legislation. The Federal Public Service normally publishes not the exact figure, but an index, separately for blue-collar and white-collar workers. For both categories, this index has remained unchanged since the beginning of 2003.

Bulgaria – Normal weekly working time is rarely collectively agreed. No data available.

Croatia – Estimate based on the assumption that provisions on working time in collective agreements are the same as provisions of the Labour Act on working time.

Cyprus – Source: Cyprus Labour Institute ([INEK-PEO](#)).

Czech Republic – 37.3 to 39.6 hours, depending on the working time arrangements: single-shift operation (39.6 hours per week), two-shift operation (38.3 hours per week), operation on three shifts (37.4 hours per week) and continuous operation (37.3 hours per week). The figure provided is based on company-level collective agreements (CLCAs) containing provisions on the number of working hours per week without differentiation of working mode. Source: Information System on Working Conditions ([ISPP](#)), a regular annual survey of wages and working conditions negotiated in collective agreements for the relevant year.

Denmark – Estimate based on weekly working hours provided by the Industry Agreement and all other collective agreements.

Finland – The figure is an estimate based on typical provisions of sectoral agreements.

France – The figure is from the Ministry of Labour's Directorate for Research, Studies and Statistics (Direction de l'animation de la recherche, des études et des statistiques, DARES); it refers to average collective weekly working hours, December 2012.

Germany – Source: Collective Bargaining Archive of the Economic and Social Research Institute ([WSI](#)).

Greece – Source: Information Centres for Workers and Unemployed People ([KEPEA](#)) of the Greek General Confederation of Labour (Γενική Συνομοσπονδία Εργατών Ελλάδας, GSEE).

Hungary – Collective agreements usually reiterate the statutory working week of 40 hours; although the Labour Code allows collective agreements to stipulate a shorter period, in practice, deviations from the statutory hours are relatively rare.

Ireland – The figure is an estimate based on the Programme for National Recovery (PNR), from 1987, which set a framework agreement on the shortening of the working week by one hour in cases where the normal working week was 40 hours or more; the implementation was to be negotiated locally, on an organisation-by-organisation basis.

Italy – The figure represents an estimate based on the range 36–40 hours per week provided in collective agreements. Source: National Archive of Collective Agreements ([Archivio Nazionale dei Contratti Collettivi di Lavoro](#)).

Malta – The figure is an estimate based on the fact that, while no statistical data exist, most collective agreements specify a normal weekly working time of 40 hours.

Netherlands – The figure is from the [Labour Inspectorate](#)'s review of collective agreements; no changes have been registered since 2007.

Norway – The figure represents 'normal working hours' for employees covered by collective agreements; employees working shifts or nights work fewer weekly hours.

Portugal – The figure is from 2010; over 90% of the workforce in the private sector is covered by some kind of collective agreement, independently from the year of signature. According to statistics published by the Ministry of Labour, the average collectively agreed working week in 2010 would be 38.9 hours. The source does not state whether the presented data are weighted or not. Source: Ministry of Labour/Office of Strategy and Planning ([GEP](#)), Quadros de Pessoal, 2010.

Romania – Estimate by correspondent based on collective agreements signed in 2012. Source: [Ministry of Labour, Family, Social Protection and Elderly](#).

Slovakia – Average figure is based on a sample survey conducted in organisations employing almost 43% of employees in the economy. Source: Information System on Working Conditions (ISPP), 2012, by [Trexima Bratislava](#).

Spain – Own calculation based on provisional average agreed annual working time of 1,747.8 hours in 2012, on the assumption of a 6-day working week and 274 working days per year. Source: [Labour Statistic Bulletin, Ministry of Labour](#).

Sweden – Source: Statistics Sweden ([SCB](#)).

UK – Incomes Data Services ([IDS](#)) figures based on a database of information from 302 organisations and industry agreements (2012).

Annex 2

Back to Figure 2

Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the metalworking sector

The data in Figure 2 should be read in conjunction with the following notes.

Austria – Estimate by the correspondent on basis of collective agreements in the sector.

Belgium – Figure is for blue-collar workers in metal, mechanical and electrical engineering (Joint Committee 111) and white-collar workers in metal engineering (Joint Committee 209). Agreements within these committees are differentiated by province and/or subsector, and in general set normal weekly working time at 38 hours. These agreements are amended at company level by working time reductions and/or the use of flexible working time regimes.

Bulgaria – Working time in the industry is not based on collective agreements but it is regulated by two legal documents – Decree 267 of 2005 and the Labour Code. These stipulate 35 hours per week for hazardous occupations and jobs with hard working conditions, and 40 hours for all other occupations. Source: [Metalicy](#) Trade Union Federation.

Croatia – Estimate based on a sample of collective agreements in the sector; these contain identical provisions on working time to those set in the Labour Act.

Cyprus – 38 hours since 2009. Source: Cyprus Metalworkers, Mechanics and Electricians Trade Union ([SEMMHK-PEO](#))

Czech Republic – Figure from the ISPP, refers to hours set by company-level collective agreements, the more prevalent bargaining level.

Denmark – As set in the Industry Agreement.

Estonia – No information is available on the exact contents of the collective agreements. The figure stems from the legislation in place (that is, 40 hours per week).

Finland – The figure corresponds to collectively agreed normal weekly working hours in metalworking in 2012; it was 36.6 hours in 2011.

France – According to the quarterly [Acemo](#) survey (DARES), the average working week was 35.8 hours in December 2012 and 35.6 hours in December 2011.

Germany – Source: Collective Bargaining Archive of the WSI.

Greece – Source: [Organisation for Mediation and Arbitration](#).

Hungary – There is no sectoral collective agreement valid for the entire metal sector. Normally 40 hours according to the Labour Code.

Ireland – Programme for National Recovery (PNR), from 1987.

Italy – Estimate by the correspondent based on data from the national collective agreements of the sector collected in the National Archive of Collective Agreements (Archivio Nazionale dei Contratti collettivi di lavoro).

Luxembourg – *Convention collective de travail Arcelor–Mittal*, referring to 2011.

Malta – Collective agreements are carried out only at enterprise level. Source: Metal and Construction Section of the General Workers' Union ([GWU](#)).

Netherlands – As set in the sectoral agreement.

Norway – Source: *Industrioverenskomsten*, the collective agreement covering the metal industry, blue-collar workers.

Portugal – The figure is based on the branch agreement between Associação dos Industriais Metalúrgicos, Metalomecânicos e Afins de Portugal (AIMMAP) and a group of unions led by the National Industry and Energy Trade Union (SINDEL) (first published in 2010, first revision published January 2013) and the branch agreement between the Federação Nacional do Metal (FENAME) and a group of unions led by the Federação Portuguesa dos Sindicatos do Comércio, Escritórios e Serviços (FETESE) (last revision published in 2009).

Slovakia – Source: ISPP, 2012, by [Trexima Bratislava](#).

Spain – Calculated from the [Ministry of Labour and Immigration's](#) collective bargaining statistics on average agreed annual working hours for the sectors with NACE codes 24 and 25, on the assumption of a 6-day week and 274 working days a year. On average, these were 1,753.32 hours in 2011 and 1,754.9 hours in 2012; the average collectively agreed working week in 2011 was 38.4 hours.

Sweden – Estimate based on figures from SCB covering the wider sector of manufacturing, mining and quarrying.

UK – The figure from IDS is the average of (mainly company-level) agreements and refers to 'engineering' (including 'electronics'); the figure for 2011 was 37.5 hours.

Annex 3

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Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the banking sector

The data in Figure 3 should be read in conjunction with the following notes.

Austria – Estimate by the correspondent on basis of collective agreements in the sector.

Belgium – The figure is an estimate based on the provisions of various subsectoral agreements.

Bulgaria – Working time in the branch is not negotiated; the figure corresponds to the provision of the Labour Code for a 40-hour working week. Source: National Bank Syndicate.

Croatia – Estimate based on a sample of collective agreements in the sector; these contain identical provisions on working time as those set out in the Labour Act.

Cyprus – 37 hours. Source: Cyprus Union of Bank Employees ([ETYK](#)).

Czech Republic – The figure, from the ISPP, refers to hours set by company-level collective agreements, the more prevalent bargaining level, in the banking and insurance sector.

Denmark – As set in the financial sector agreement.

Finland – The collectively agreed normal working week in banking was 37 hours in 2012, the same as in 2011.

France – According to the quarterly Acemo survey (DARES), the average working week was 35 hours in December 2011 and the same in December 2012.

Germany – Source: Collective Bargaining Archive of the WSI.

Greece – Source: Greek Federation of Bank Employee Unions ([OTOE](#)).

Hungary – According to the Trade Union of Commerce Workers (KASZ), there is no sectoral collective agreement valid for the entire banking sector.

Ireland – Programme for National Recovery, from 1987.

Italy – The figure is from the national collective agreement of the sector. Source: National Archive of Collective Agreements (Archivio Nazionale dei Contratti collettivi di lavoro).

Luxembourg – [Convention collective de travail des Salariés de Banque du 26 Avril 2011](#), covering the period 2011–2013.

Malta – Estimate based on a sample of major collective agreements in the sector.

Netherlands – The figure is an estimate calculated from the yearly number of hours collectively agreed.

Norway – Source: *Sentralavtalen*, the collective agreement covering the finance sector.

Portugal – Collective agreement between a group of more than 20 banks and a group of trade unions led by the Federation of the Financial Sector (FEBASE).

Slovakia – Source: ISPP, 2012, by [Trexima Bratislava](#).

Spain – Calculated on basis of 1,689.46 as average annual working hours, on the assumption of a 6-day week and 274 working days per year; 1,687.37 in 2011. Source: Ministry of Labour and Immigration.

Sweden – Estimate based on figures from SCB covering the financial and insurance activities sector.

UK – The figure from IDS is an average of (company-level) agreements and refers to ‘finance’; the figure for 2011 was 35.3 hours.

Annex 4

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Average collectively agreed normal weekly hours in the local government sector

The data in Figure 4 should be read in conjunction with the following notes.

Austria – This is the usual figure for local government employees; working time is fixed in Public Sector Employment Law.

Belgium – The figure corresponds to the general, statutory rule in the public sector.

Croatia – Collective Agreement for State Servants and Employees.

Cyprus – The figure is from the Pancyprian Public Employees Trade Union ([PASYDY](#)).

Denmark – As set in the agreement for the local government sector.

Estonia – There are 23 collective agreements registered, of which 17 provide better conditions in relation to weekly working time than regulated by law (there is no information on the exact contents). Weekly working time in the sector stems from the legislation in place (that is, 40 hours per week).

Finland – Estimate based on the collective agreements in the sector.

France – A 35-hour week is assumed, on the basis of legislation.

Germany – Figure is from the Collective Agreement Archive of the WSI.

Greece – Source: [Organisation for Mediation and Arbitration](#).

Ireland – Labour Court recommendation [LCR20366](#) (2010–2014).

Italy – The figure from the National collective agreement of the sector. Source: National Archive of Collective Agreements (Archivio Nazionale dei Contratti collettivi di lavoro).

Luxembourg – General Statute of the Civil Servants, set by law.

Malta – The figure refers to working hours set by the collective agreement for clerical workers in local councils.

Netherlands – As set in the sectoral agreement.

Norway – As set in the *Hovedtariffavtalen*, the collective agreement covering the municipal sector.

Portugal – There is no collective bargaining in local government; there are negotiations at the level of the public administration as a whole, but the government decides unilaterally on wages and working conditions.

Slovakia – Source: ISPP, 2012, by [Trexima Bratislava](#).

Spain – As set by the Civil Service Statute.

Sweden – The figure is from the SCB and refers to the whole public administration.

UK – The figure is from IDS; it corresponds to national agreements for local government employees in England, Wales and Scotland.

Annex 5

Back to Figure 9

Statutory minimum annual paid leave

The data in Figure 9 should be read in conjunction with the following notes.

Austria – Expressed as 30 working days, including Saturdays.

Belgium – The figure refers to the private sector; the minimum statutory entitlement in the public sector is 24 days.

Bulgaria – Higher statutory entitlements apply to such groups such as young workers (under 18 years old) and workers with reduced work capacity, who get 26 paid leave days, and workers in hazardous work or working irregular hours, with 25 days.

Croatia – Expressed as 4 weeks; that is, 20 working days for workers working a 5-day week and 24 working days for workers on a 6-day week.

Cyprus – 25 days for those working a 6-day week.

Czech Republic – Expressed as 4 weeks.

Denmark – Holiday Act, which contains provisions implementing parts of the Council Directive 93/104/EC of 23 November 1993 concerning working time organisation.

Estonia – Source: **Employment Contracts act**.

France – Expressed as 30 working days or 5 weeks.

Germany – Expressed as 24 working days or 4 weeks (that is, Monday to Saturday).

Greece – 24 working days for those working a 6-day week; entitlement increases after one year's service.

Hungary – According to the Labour Code, minimum of 20 days complemented by additional days according to age and number of dependent children.

Ireland – Expressed as 20 working days in the Organisation of Working Time Act, 1997.

Italy – Expressed as 4 weeks plus 5 compensation days.

Latvia – Expressed as 4 calendar weeks.

Lithuania – Expressed as 28 calendar days; certain groups, such as lone parents and people with disabilities, have an entitlement of 35 calendar days.

Malta – Expressed as 24 working days.

Norway – 21 days, as in Annual Holiday Act.

Poland – Entitlement increases from 20 to 26 days after 10 years of employment.

Slovakia – Expressed as 20 working days or 4 weeks.

Slovenia – Expressed as 4 weeks; older workers, workers with disabilities and those taking care of children with disabilities are entitled to at least 3 additional days, and workers under the age of 18 are entitled to 7 additional working days; leave entitlement increases for parents by 1 day a year for each child under the age of 15.

Sweden – Expressed as 25 working days in Annual Leave Act.

UK – Since April 2009, the statutory entitlement has included 8 public holidays.

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