



European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions

Measuring job satisfaction in surveys - Comparative analytical report

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This report is available in electronic format only.

This report provides a comparative overview of how job satisfaction is measured in national working conditions surveys, based on 16 national contributions to a questionnaire ([PDF file](#)). It investigates conceptual and methodological issues in the study of job satisfaction. The report then examines survey results on levels of general or overall job satisfaction among workers, as well as identifying the relationship between specific factors relating to work and job satisfaction. The national contributions from the following 16 countries are available (as PDF files): [Austria](#), [Bulgaria](#), the [Czech Republic](#), [Denmark](#), [Estonia](#), [Finland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Hungary](#), [Italy](#), the [Netherlands](#), [Portugal](#), [Romania](#), [Spain](#), [Sweden](#) and the [United Kingdom](#). Jorge Cabrita and Heloisa Perista (CESIS, Portugal) coordinated the preparation of this comparative analytical report.

Importance of job satisfaction

Investigated by several disciplines such as psychology, sociology, economics and management sciences, job satisfaction is a frequently studied subject in work and organisational literature. This is mainly due to the fact that many experts believe that job satisfaction trends can affect labour market behaviour and influence work productivity, work effort, employee absenteeism and staff turnover. Moreover, job satisfaction is considered a strong predictor of overall individual well-being (Diaz-Serrano and Cabral Vieira, 2005), as well as a good predictor of intentions or decisions of employees to leave a job (Gazioglu and Tansel, 2002).

Beyond the research literature and studies, job satisfaction is also important in everyday life. Organisations have significant effects on the people who work for them and some of those effects are reflected in how people feel about their work (Spector, 1997). This makes job satisfaction an issue of substantial importance for both employers and employees. As many studies suggest, employers benefit from satisfied employees as they are more likely to profit from lower staff turnover and higher productivity if their employees experience a high level of job satisfaction. However, employees should also 'be happy in their work, given the amount of time they have to devote to it throughout their working lives' (Nguyen, Taylor and Bradley, 2003a).

The following passage summarises the importance of job satisfaction for both employers and their workers:

Job satisfaction is important in its own right as a part of social welfare, and this (simple) taxonomy [of a good job] allows a start to be made on such questions as 'In what respects are older workers' jobs better than those of younger workers?' (and vice versa), 'Who has the good jobs?' and 'Are good jobs being replaced by bad jobs?'. In addition, measures of job quality seem to be useful predictors of future labour market behaviour. Workers' decisions about whether to work or not, what kind of job to accept or stay in, and how hard to work are all likely to depend in part upon the worker's subjective evaluation of their work, in other words on their job satisfaction. (Clark, 1998)

Objectives of report

The main objective of this comparative analytical report is to assess whether and how the job satisfaction issue is addressed in national surveys, and to examine some data and trends on job satisfaction. This report will reveal how national surveys produce data on job satisfaction, focusing on the methodologies used, and will present available data on job satisfaction.

This objective comprises four main goals:

1. to highlight policy at European level on the job satisfaction issue, and to consider it in an international context. After a brief analysis of the European policy context, the report will discuss the concept of job satisfaction and the presentation of recent comparable data and trends on the subject at international and EU levels;
2. to understand how job satisfaction is assessed in the countries of 16 national correspondents reporting to the [European Working Conditions Observatory \(EWCO\)](#): Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom (UK). To achieve this understanding, a mapping exercise will be carried out, i.e. the focus will be to report information about the availability of data and the way national working conditions

- surveys or other data sources address the job satisfaction issue, including the identification of major data sources and the wording of survey questions used;
3. to outline the main trends and correlations regarding job satisfaction in the 16 countries, identifying both key differences and also common characteristics. Furthermore, this report explores the possible correlation between job satisfaction and some other work-related issues, namely job autonomy, working time and work-life balance, worker participation, work-related stress and salary;
 4. to examine some of the main research findings in the participating countries. In this regard, the report briefly explores recent conceptual approaches to job satisfaction, methodological approaches in relation to measuring job satisfaction and the correlations related to job satisfaction, including possible explanatory factors and effects of job satisfaction on other work-related variables.

Information sources

This report relies principally on the contributions of 16 EWCO national correspondents, responding to a questionnaire ([PDF file](#)). The national reports are also available as PDF files: [Austria](#), [Bulgaria](#), the [Czech Republic](#), [Denmark](#), [Estonia](#), [Finland](#), [France](#), [Germany](#), [Hungary](#), [Italy](#), the [Netherlands](#), [Portugal](#), [Romania](#), [Spain](#), [Sweden](#) and the [United Kingdom](#).

This comparative analytical report also refers to data from the second (1995) and third (2000) [European Working Conditions Surveys \(EWCS\)](#) of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions (hereafter referred to as the Foundation), as well as information and data from other available comparative studies at European level.

Policy context

At European policy level, there has been a strong emphasis in recent years on achieving quality in work and on the importance of generating better jobs in the European Union.

European policymakers have identified ‘more and better jobs’ as a principal objective in the EU’s vision for the future. This formulation was first used in the conclusions of the extraordinary European Council in Lisbon in March 2000, which defined a new strategic goal for the EU for the next decade. The objective of the Lisbon strategy therefore is ‘to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion’.

The focus on quality in work was reaffirmed by the subsequent European Council meetings. The Nice meeting included the promotion of quality as a main theme for actions and initiatives over the period 2000-2005 in the European Social Agenda; In Stockholm the introduction of ‘quality as a general objective in the 2002 Employment Guidelines’ was decided; and the Barcelona summit recognised that quality ‘will make possible higher employment levels. The objective of creating better jobs thus complements and reinforces that of creating more jobs’.
([Employment in Europe 2002](#))

Improving quality in work and the concept of high-quality jobs have thus been at the core of the European Employment Strategy as well as the overall Lisbon strategy. Nevertheless, it should be noted that, in 2005, the European Commission called for the renewal of the Lisbon strategy in an attempt to refocus its attention on economic growth and better jobs.

In its efforts to design a measurement framework for quality in work, in 2003, the European Commission published a series of 31 key and context indicators covering a full range of work-related factors including job security, work organisation and career development. Under the heading of ‘intrinsic job quality’, one context indicator selected for inclusion in the overall framework is ‘satisfaction with type of work in present job’, as cited in the European Community Household Panel (ECHP) survey.

Certainly, it could be expected that a measure of job satisfaction would be included as part of an overall EU measure of job quality. It seems natural and intuitive to consider job satisfaction and job quality to be strongly correlated. However, it is interesting to note that there is no consensus regarding this relationship. While some

authors conclude that job satisfaction is a good indicator of job quality (e.g. Diaz-Serrano and Cabral Vieira, 2005; D'Addio, Eriksson and Frijters, 2003), others reach the opposite conclusion (e.g. Llorente and Macías, 2003). Even though this link between job quality and job satisfaction is not proven, the policy debate on quality in work has most likely contributed to a recent renewed interest in investigating job satisfaction in the EU.

Concept of job satisfaction

Job satisfaction has been defined in several different ways and a definitive designation for the term is unlikely to materialise. A simple or general way to define it therefore is as an attitudinal variable:

Job satisfaction is simply how people feel about their jobs and different aspects of their jobs. It is the extent to which people like (satisfaction) or dislike (dissatisfaction) their jobs. (Spector, 1997)

An alternative approach is that proposed by Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, based on the assumption that there are basic and universal human needs, and that, if an individual's needs are fulfilled in their current situation, then that individual will be happy. This framework postulates that job satisfaction depends on the balance between work-role inputs - such as education, working time, effort - and work-role outputs - wages, fringe benefits, status, working conditions, intrinsic aspects of the job. If work-role outputs ('pleasures') increase relative to work-role inputs ('pains'), then job satisfaction will increase (Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2000).

Other theorists (e.g. Rose, 2001) have viewed job satisfaction as a bi-dimensional concept consisting of intrinsic and extrinsic satisfaction dimensions. Intrinsic sources of satisfaction depend on the individual characteristics of the person, such as the ability to use initiative, relations with supervisors, or the work that the person actually performs; these are symbolic or qualitative facets of the job. Extrinsic sources of satisfaction are situational and depend on the environment, such as pay, promotion, or job security; these are financial and other material rewards or advantages of a job. Both extrinsic and intrinsic job facets should be represented, as equally as possible, in a composite measure of overall job satisfaction.

This distinction, as described by Rose, relates to the double meaning of the word 'job': the work tasks performed and the post occupied by the person performing those tasks.

The meaning of 'job' as a post or appointment is of primary importance. Every job is an instance of the employment relationship, embodying a contract (substantive or implied) to exchange an ability to work (labour, provide service, exercise ingenuity, direct efforts of others, etc) for rewards (both material and symbolic). True, performing work tasks provides a stream of experiences, technical and social, that can energise psychosocial responses; any resulting data summarising these reactions are indispensable. However, such data must not be weighted higher than those concerning experience of the overt (or ostensible) contractual terms - above all, those concerning pay and job security. (Rose, 2001)

Data and trends at international and EU level

According to the European Commission in its review on the progress on quality in work in 2003,

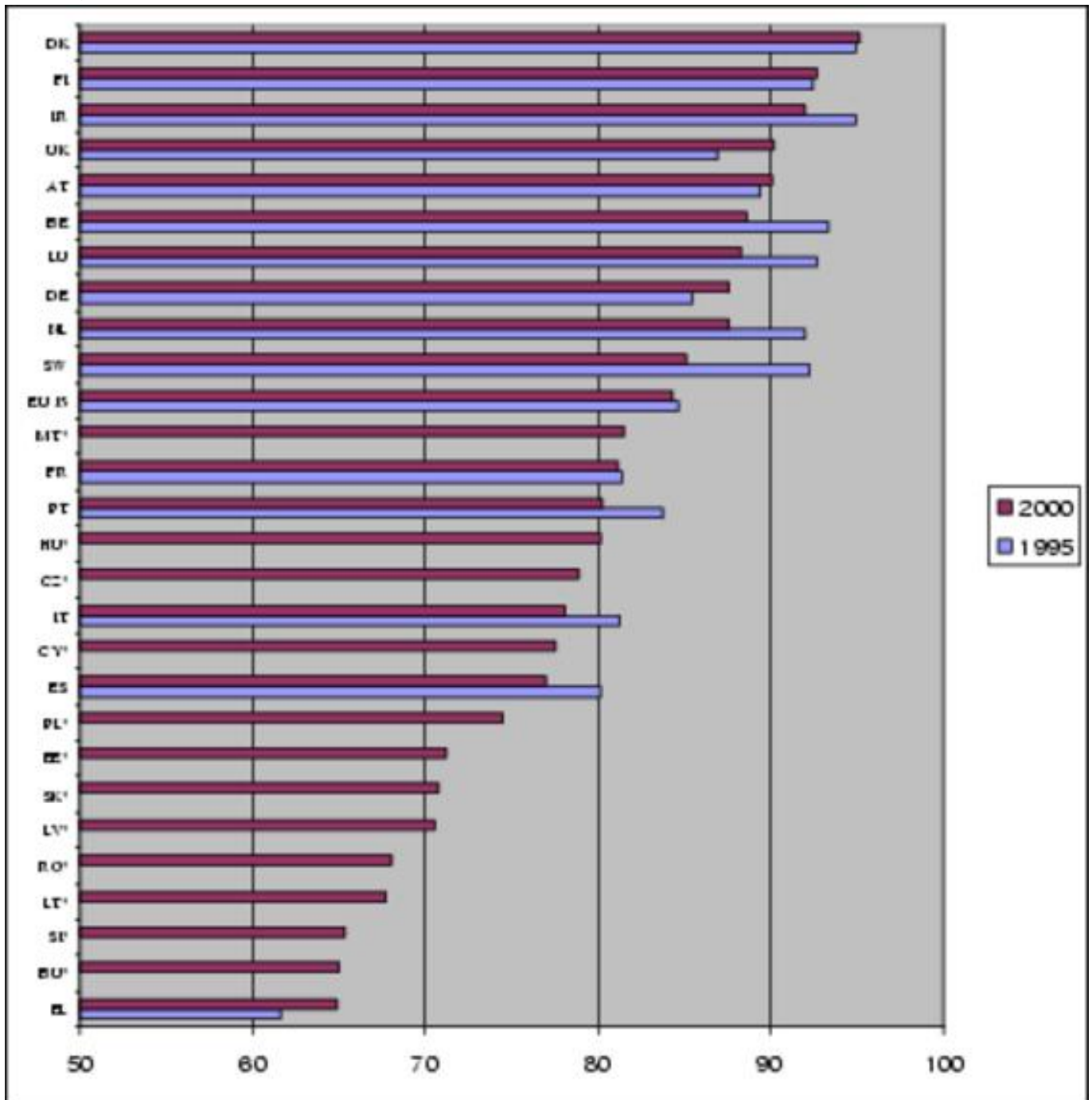
'despite the strong employment performance observed in European labour markets in the second half of the 1990s, recent data on the evolution of job satisfaction and job quality ... over this period do not indicate significant changes in quality in work. Only in Greece and Portugal was there a significant decrease in the share of employees expressing low satisfaction with their type of work. On the other hand, job satisfaction seems to have deteriorated somewhat in Italy in the 1996-2000 period. In 2000, in the EU overall, around 20% of all employees still declared themselves dissatisfied with their job. Relatively high degrees of dissatisfaction in Greece, Italy and Spain contrast with very high shares (90% or more) of employees who are satisfied with their job in Denmark, France, Ireland, the Netherlands and, most notably, Austria' ([Employment in Europe 2003](#) , analysis based on the ECHP) .

The EWCS also provide data for 1995 and 2000. From this data - not entirely consistent with the ECHP data - the overall score of job satisfaction seems to have remained at the same high level (84%) for those reporting that they

were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with working conditions in their jobs. However, the proportion of satisfied employees declined in nine of the EU15 Member States during that five-year period. As Figure 1 shows, the only exceptions were Denmark, Finland, the UK, Austria, Germany and Greece, where the proportion of satisfied workers slightly increased. Somewhat contradicting the ECHP data, the proportion of employees expressing low satisfaction increased in Portugal from 16.2% in 1995 to 19.7% in 2000.

As a continuation of its 2000 survey, in 2001, the Foundation carried out the same working conditions survey in the new Member States - Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia - as well as Bulgaria and Romania. Its figures reveal that, in those countries, the levels of satisfied workers are below the EU15 average of 2000: overall, the proportion of employees expressing satisfaction with their working conditions is 72.5%. Only Malta and Hungary exceed a proportion of 80% of satisfied workers.

Figure 1: Job satisfaction in 27 EU countries, 1995-2000 (% of employees expressing satisfaction with their working conditions)



Source: EWCS, 1995 and 2000; * 2001 figures

A recent study (Bauer, 2004), using a partial set of the EWCS 2000 data, analyses the distribution of job satisfaction across the EU15. According to this analysis, ‘relatively little variance could be observed across countries. Most workers state that they are fairly satisfied with the working conditions in their main job. The highest average level of job satisfaction could be observed in Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands. The lowest average job satisfaction is reported by workers in the southern European countries of Greece, Italy, Spain and Portugal’.

Table 1: Job satisfaction in EU15, 2000 (%)

Country	Not at all satisfied	Not very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Very satisfied	Mean (standard deviation)
Austria	1.0%	10.6%	49.9%	38.5%	2.258 (0.682)
Belgium	3.2%	9.4%	56.1%	31.3%	2.155 (0.716)
Denmark	1.1%	3.9%	41.2%	53.8%	2.475 (0.630)
Finland	1.3%	5.7%	65.1%	27.9%	2.195 (0.593)
France	4.8%	17.5%	60.2%	17.5%	1.904 (0.730)
Germany	2.0%	12.8%	60.2%	25.0%	2.082 (0.673)
Greece	5.1%	26.1%	54.8%	14.0%	1.777 (0.746)
Ireland	0.8%	4.9%	44.5%	49.8%	2.433 (0.626)
Italy	4.5%	17.8%	60.1%	17.5%	1.906 (0.726)
Luxembourg	1.5%	10.5%	61.6%	26.4%	2.128 (0.644)
Netherlands	2.1%	9.6%	40.3%	48.0%	2.341 (0.739)
Spain	4.2%	19.2%	62.1%	14.4%	1.869 (0.698)
Portugal	3.4%	16.2%	68.8%	11.6%	1.886 (0.634)
Sweden	5.1%	10.3%	56.5%	28.0%	2.074 (0.764)
UK	3.2%	6.1%	50.8%	39.9%	2.273 (0.717)
EU15	3.3%	13.0%	56.8%	26.9%	2.074 (0.724)

Note: All self-employed individuals, civil servants, individuals older than 65 years as well as all individuals working in the non-profit sector, in agriculture, mining and the army were excluded from the original sample, as were individuals with missing information on one of the variables used. This led to a reduced final sample of 10,693 observations.

Source: Bauer, 2004, using EWCS 2000 data

Among other studies aimed at analysing the levels of job satisfaction by taking a cross-national approach, reference can be made to a paper (Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2000) that used data for 21 countries of the 1997 Work Orientations dataset from the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). Among the findings of this analysis are the following:

- In all countries, the level of job satisfaction is remarkably high. Only a small fraction of workers are dissatisfied with their work (about 4% in Switzerland, about 10% in the United States of America (US) and 16% in Russia).

- Workers in Denmark reported the highest level of job satisfaction, while workers in Hungary reported the lowest level.
- All of the five east European countries considered (Hungary, Russia, Slovenia, Bulgaria and the Czech Republic) were among the eight countries showing the lowest satisfaction levels.
- Japanese workers reported the third lowest level of job satisfaction.
- A comparison with the 1989 ISSP data reveals that job satisfaction declined in Germany and the US in the 1990s.

It is worth mentioning that there is no consensus about recent job satisfaction trends. From academic research, there are interesting claims and counterclaims about job satisfaction trends in the past decade. There is at least some evidence to suggest that there has been a decline in levels of reported job satisfaction, for example in the UK, Germany (see Green and Tsitsianis, 2005) and the US (see 'US job satisfaction keeps falling, the Conference Board reports today', The Conference Board, February 2005; see also Blanchflower and Oswald, 1999).

In many ways this comes as something of a surprise. The growing service orientation of the labour market, the decline of often more routine, industry-based jobs, increasing salary levels and other positive factors would perhaps lead one to expect the opposite trend. As Green and Tsitsianis (2005) comment, 'any decline within a modern European nation might be regarded as surprising for an affluent economy with rising real wages. The resolution to this paradox might reside in changing aspects of jobs, whose effect on job satisfaction could have outweighed any beneficial effects of rising wages'.

Such changing aspects of jobs that may have a negative effect on overall satisfaction levels include increasing levels of job intensification, deteriorating work-life balance and increasing expectations on individuals in the workplace arising from greater competitive pressures and globalisation. Moreover, Llorente and Macías (2003) consider that 'those workers in not very attractive jobs, but with few expectations regarding their possibility of changing jobs, probably end up, even if only for the sake of mental health, lowering their expectations and probably also increasing their declared level of job satisfaction.' In fact, the opposite scenario may also be true: a shift in the expectations of workers themselves - towards increased expectations - may be responsible for decreased levels of job satisfaction in certain cases.

It should be emphasised that Rose attaches many caveats to any readings of data that purport to show a decline in job satisfaction. In his opinion, such findings derive as much from a superficial analysis of the data as from any real decrease in job satisfaction. In one piece of analysis (Rose, 2001, p. 31), he points out that, in the UK in the 1990s - based on British Household Panel Survey (BHPS) data - job satisfaction in relation to extrinsic job factors (pay, etc) rose significantly, while job satisfaction with intrinsic job factors (the work itself) decreased. Overall, the two tendencies were inclined to cancel each other out, leaving only a small overall negative trend in job satisfaction.

His explanation for these divergent trends of different aspects of job satisfaction coincides with the analysis presented above: positive effects of higher wage levels are counterbalanced by declines in traditional, job quality-related, intrinsic aspects of work - such as increased intensification of tasks or stress.

Measuring job satisfaction in Europe

International level surveys

In reporting the international level data sources regarding job satisfaction, three main surveys were identified and have already been mentioned. In the research context, these are the most common data sources used.

The ISSP, 'a continuing annual programme of cross-national collaboration on surveys covering topics important for social science research', includes [41 member countries](#), and was one of the first international surveys to assess job satisfaction. The topic is one of the issues addressed by the Work Orientation Module, which was carried out for the first time in 1989 and again in 1997. The Work Orientation Module III took place in 2005.

The EWCS, organised by the Foundation, is a European level survey that also addresses the job satisfaction issue. First applied in 1990/1991 in the 12 European Community Member States, its third edition in 2000 was subsequently extended to cover the 10 new Member States that joined the EU in the same year, as well as Bulgaria and Romania; Turkey was added in 2002. The fourth EWCS was carried out in all EU25 Member States in 2005

and a descriptive report will be published in autumn 2006.

The ECHP, an international survey conducted by Eurostat, also covered job satisfaction on an annual basis in its eight waves from 1994 to 2001.

National level surveys

The information provided by the national contributions to this comparative analytical report makes it possible to catalogue the available national representative data sources that address job satisfaction.

Based on each national survey, it appears that job satisfaction is an issue that has only recently been assessed by nationally representative surveys. Most of the surveys addressing the job satisfaction issue were implemented for the first time in 1990 or later.

Survey questions

Job satisfaction is measured in many different ways in the national surveys, with a variety of questions and wordings. There is no consensus about the best or standard way to measure job satisfaction.

Among the national surveys, single-item questions regarding respondents' general job satisfaction are the most common measurement, but they also often contain multi-faceted questions regarding respondents' satisfaction in relation to different job aspects. In some cases, multi-faceted questions are used as stand-alone questions regarding job satisfaction but in other cases they are used in addition to single-item questions.

In accordance with recent research regarding the measurement of job satisfaction, it seems unlikely that there is an optimal way to measure the issue although there appears to be a consensus that multi-item questions that categorise job satisfaction into various facets are more thorough - and richer in analytical terms - than single-item job satisfaction questions. Moreover, with the variety of approaches taken, as indicated above, the national surveys do not show a clear pattern regarding the questions used to assess the level of job satisfaction among workers. Therefore, some background notes should be introduced here.

On the one hand, D'Addio, Eriksson and Frijters (2003) underline that the reported overall job satisfaction may capture some additional aspects of the jobs held or reflect differences in the weight each employee attaches to individual job facets. In other words, the overall rating for job satisfaction is not likely to be a simple average of the workers' satisfaction levels for the different aspects of a job but will be a more complex assessment.

However, on the other hand, Rose (2001) points to the inadequacy of single-item overall job satisfaction measures compared with a composite measure of overall job satisfaction using several job facets. Based on this perspective, it is essential to collect data for a minimum of two job facets for two reasons. A fundamental reason is the logical difference between the financial and other material rewards of a job (the extrinsic factors) and those that are qualitative (the intrinsic factors). Another more subtle reason pointed out by Rose is that 'intrinsic facets of a job appear to be subjected by job holders to less stringent evaluation than those applied to extrinsic job facets'; thus, levels of satisfaction with extrinsic facets such as pay, promotion or security will, in any representative sample of employees, always be lower than satisfaction with intrinsic facets such as relations with supervisors or the work actually performed.

The logic of a composite measure is not simply that it must reflect evaluations of more than one job facet, but that it seeks to guarantee a balanced representation of both extrinsic and intrinsic factors. According to Rose, 'when an employee is offered no more than a single seven-point ordinal rating for overall satisfaction, complexity is automatically excluded'; he concludes that 'to choose to use a single-item indicator when a genuine composite measure can readily be created is deliberately to discard important information and risk distorted interpretation'.

Data and trends on general job satisfaction

As previously mentioned, it is possible to distinguish two ways of measuring job satisfaction: general job satisfaction - measuring the overall satisfaction of the people surveyed regarding their job - and partial job

satisfaction - measuring people's satisfaction with different aspects of their job (for example, working conditions, working hours and income).

Data provided by the national correspondents regarding general or overall job satisfaction reveal that all countries, with the exception of Romania, have high levels of general job satisfaction. As Table 2 shows, a significant majority of survey respondents are satisfied with their jobs.

Table 2: Job satisfaction levels, by country

Country	Index / percentage
Austria	108
Bulgaria	73% ('completely satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied' with working conditions)
Czech Republic	63% ('very satisfied' and 'satisfied')
	62% ('very satisfied' and 'satisfied rather than dissatisfied')
Denmark	95.27% ('to a high degree' and 'to some degree')
Estonia	83% ('very satisfied and 'quite satisfied')
Finland	93% ('very satisfied' and 'quite satisfied')
France	-
Germany	91.3% ('very satisfied' and 'more or less satisfied')
Hungary	80% ('very satisfied' and 'relatively satisfied')
Italy	90.6% ('very satisfied' and 'fairly satisfied')
Netherlands	80% ('very satisfied' and 'satisfied')
Portugal	77.7% ('fully satisfied', 'largely satisfied' and 'somewhat satisfied')
Romania	52.5% ('very satisfied' and 'satisfied')
Spain	89.1% ('very satisfied' and 'satisfied')
Sweden	72.3% ('satisfied')
UK	84% ('fully satisfied')

Notes: As the percentages indicated above are based on different question formulations and often also on different response scales, they serve for illustrative purposes only and should not be used as a basis for comparison between countries. A list of survey acronyms is included at the end of the report.

Source: National contributions

Where trend data are available and cited by the national correspondents, the evidence appears to point to a generally stable or increasing level of job satisfaction at national level in most of the countries surveyed, with a few exceptions where declining levels of work or job satisfaction are reported.

The survey sources in Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands and Portugal show high (70% and more satisfied or very satisfied or equivalent) and stable or slightly increasing levels of reported job satisfaction over successive survey waves. In the UK, by contrast, different surveys find decreasing levels of job satisfaction both in terms of responses to general, single-item questions as well as to multi-item questions categorising job

satisfaction into sub-elements. Nevertheless, the reported levels of job satisfaction remain at a comparatively high level in the UK, with 84% of respondents to the WBS 2000 survey reporting positive job satisfaction, compared to 86% in the earlier EIBS 1992 survey. (See end of report for list of survey acronyms.)

In Germany, the relevant trend question (source: SOEP-monitor) asks respondents about changes in work satisfaction year after year, by looking at the numbers registering less, more or equal satisfaction with work compared with the previous year. In east Germany, where data are available since 1991/1992, the proportion of employees who feel more satisfied with their work has declined, while no clear trend is visible in west Germany. For both parts of the country, it is necessary to go back through 13 annual surveys to find a year (1991/1992) where a higher proportion of workers reported being more satisfied than a year previously. In Austria, the *Arbeitsklima* index (1997=100) indicates increased levels of job satisfaction in recent years (rising to 108 index points in 2004 and remaining stable at that level in 2005).

An interesting comparison presents itself between different post-transition states in eastern Europe. In Hungary, according to the national contribution, 'the general level of job satisfaction increased substantially [...] between 1994-1996 and 1999-2001'; the national correspondent explains this with reference to the fact that the earlier survey was carried out during a period of extensive economic and social restructuring post-1989, while the later survey took place in a more stable, macroeconomic climate. Survey data from Bulgaria show a significant increase in overall positive job satisfaction, from 64% to 73% between 2001 and 2005. For Romania, on the other hand, recent survey data show declining levels of job satisfaction over the period 1994-1998, followed by a recovery in the next data collection year (2001) and then a renewed decline in 2001-2004.

Education

Regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and peoples' education, there seems to be a common trend in those countries that had available data: the higher the education level, the higher the degree of job satisfaction among employees.

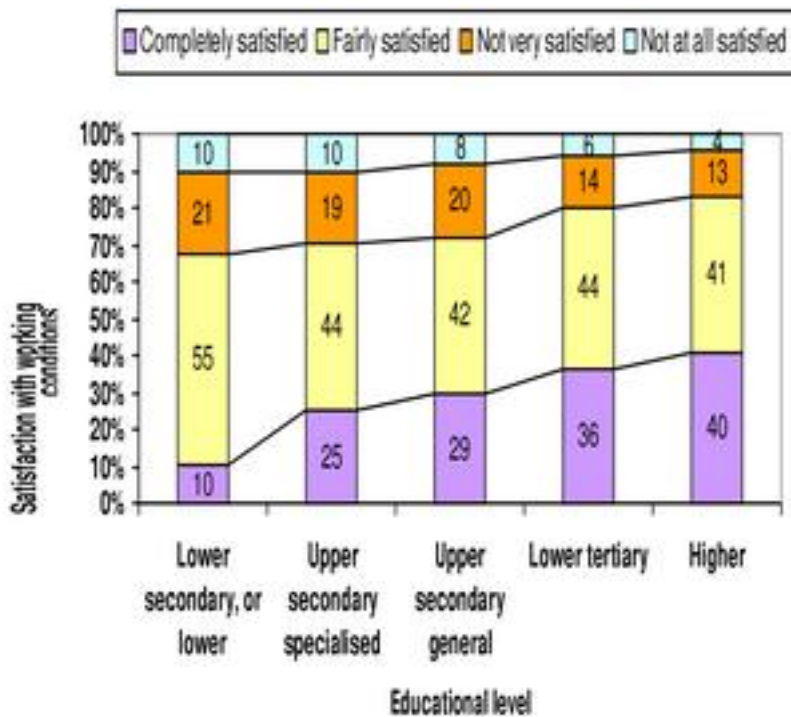
Although in some countries (Denmark, Finland and Italy) this trend is only a tendency, in many others (Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and Spain), the surveys' results highlight more clearly that job satisfaction levels are higher among better educated people.

The data provided by the Danish contribution lead to an interesting finding that somewhat contradicts the trend referred to above. In Denmark, semi-skilled women (with less than 12 months of training) - typically employed in low quality jobs in terms of the physical environment and remuneration - are as satisfied as women with higher educational qualifications. Moreover, men with no vocational training are more likely to be satisfied to a 'high degree' than semi-skilled male workers. Even so, there is a slight tendency for job satisfaction to increase with increasing educational levels. It should be noted that the group of semi-skilled women represented a small number of cases in the survey data; therefore, some caution should be exercised in interpreting the results.

The Italian case identified some factors for the positive correlation between job satisfaction and educational level. While satisfaction with professional fulfilment and work perspectives increases as the educational level rises, the satisfaction with internal relations with superiors and colleagues tends to decrease. In Italy, educational levels strongly increase as age decreases, due to the availability of better educational opportunities in recent times; consequently, young well-educated workers are more satisfied in their work than their older counterparts.

In the Bulgarian case, the correlation between satisfaction with working conditions and education is much stronger than for sex and age: 'the more educated people are, the higher is their satisfaction with their working conditions'. However, although higher educational levels strongly influence the proportion of people who are completely satisfied with their job, more people with lower educational levels are moderately satisfied (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Satisfaction with working conditions in Bulgaria, by education



Source: NWCS 2005, Bulgaria

Job status

Although the diversity of job status categories used in different countries makes it difficult to compare results, it is possible nevertheless to identify some common findings. According to the results of the surveys from Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Germany, workers with permanent employment contracts are more satisfied than workers with fixed-term contracts and/or temporary workers. Thus, it seems that job satisfaction increases with job security.

Research carried out in the Portuguese information and communication technologies (ICT) and retail sectors (Casaca, 2005) concluded that 'objective precariousness (contractual) is associated with a perception of weak quality of the job (subjective precariousness)'. The data reveal that, on average, permanent workers are more satisfied with the different aspects of their job than those with non-permanent contracts. The differences between these two categories of workers are particularly striking according to the extrinsic aspects of job satisfaction: 41% of the non-permanent workers consider that they are 'not satisfied' and 'not satisfied at all', compared with 10% of the permanent workers who state that they are 'not satisfied' (data refer only to the extrinsic aspects of a job - such as pay, promotion or job security).

The results from the Finnish QWL 2003 survey are the only findings that contradict this idea. In Finland, while 37% of workers with fixed-term contracts are 'very satisfied' with their jobs, only 32% of permanent workers gave the same answer. However, it should be noted that this difference is not so remarkable if all satisfied workers are taken into account: 95% of workers with fixed-term contracts are 'quite' or 'very satisfied', compared with 93% of workers with permanent contracts.

Nevertheless, in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and the Netherlands (POLS 2003 and TAS 2004) - where relevant data were also available - self-employed people were more satisfied with their job than company employees.

In the particular case of Italy, however, 'occupational status shows that both self-employed people and employees with a more precarious status report lower satisfaction in general and for almost all work aspects'. Moreover, temporary workers are the least satisfied with working times, while permanent workers are the least satisfied with

work relations and the most satisfied with work or career prospects.

Where data regarding job satisfaction in relation to working hours (part time or full time) were available, two main results emerged. While in Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands (POLS 2003), no significant differences were found between part-time and full-time workers, data from Austria (*Arbeitsklima* index) and from another survey in the Netherlands (TAS 2004) suggest that people working part time are more satisfied than full-time workers. However, a non-representative survey carried out in the ICT and retail sectors in Portugal finds that, in general, full-time workers are more satisfied with a number of aspects of their job than those working part time.

Sector of employment

Although data regarding job satisfaction by sector of employment were not available in all of the countries studied and the available data are, in most cases, not directly comparable, some similarities can be identified. The following may be concluded:

- In Portugal and Spain, people who work in the services or tertiary sector are more satisfied with their jobs than those working in industry and agriculture (the sector with the lowest job satisfaction).
- The finance/insurance or financial intermediation sector has the highest levels of job satisfaction in Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Sweden.
- Mining (or mining and quarrying) in Austria and Bulgaria, and industry or manufacturing in the Czech Republic and Denmark are the sectors with the lowest levels of job satisfaction.
- The hotel and restaurant sector emerges as having low levels of job satisfaction in Austria, Denmark (particularly among women) and the Netherlands (NEA 2003 and TAS 2004).
- In the Finnish case, where it is possible to compare 'state/municipality' with 'private' sectors, workers from the private sector report lower job satisfaction than other workers. In Estonia, there is only a marginal difference between satisfaction levels of private (81% satisfied) and public (84%) sector employees.

Gender

According to Bender, Donohue and Heywood (2005), 'the long-standing interest in estimating the size of the gender earnings gap has recently prompted a complementary interest in estimating the gender gap in job satisfaction'. In fact, the interest in job satisfaction has yielded a set of reasonable findings regarding its determinants. Still, 'the issue attracting the most attention has been the role of gender as a determinant of job satisfaction.'

The gender/job satisfaction paradox (Kaiser, 2002) or the paradox of the contented female worker (Bender et al, 2005) refers to the fact that women report higher job satisfaction than men despite a clearly disadvantaged position in the labour market in terms of earnings, recruitment/dismissals, promotions and career prospects.

Looking at the figures on job satisfaction by sex, the information provided by the national correspondents does not indicate a straightforward correlation. In the cases of Bulgaria (NWCS, satisfaction with working conditions), the Czech Republic (MQWL), Estonia (WLB), Hungary (EWCS, satisfaction with working conditions), Italy (QWS), the Netherlands (NEA 2003 and POLS 2003 surveys), Romania (BPO) and Spain (SQLW), there are no significant differences between the job satisfaction of women and men. In other words, gender does not play a key role in job satisfaction in these countries.

However, the data from other surveys seem to confirm the existence of the gender paradox. In Austria (*Arbeitsklima* index), Finland (QWLS), the Netherlands (TAS 2004 survey), Sweden (WES and ULF surveys) and the UK (BHPS), women are more satisfied than men with their jobs. It should be underlined that, historically in the UK, women have been found to be happier at work. However, data from the BHPS indicate that, if the present trend persists (declining scores for women and marginally increasing scores for men), 'it would produce convergence between the sexes in the next five to 10 years'. According to Rose, this is due to the fact that women are increasingly driven out to work for economic reasons rather than to achieve personal satisfaction: they 'more and more see themselves as sharing the role of breadwinner, helping to pay the grocery bill and - increasingly for the younger ones - the mortgage' (University of Bath, 2005).

Contradicting the gender paradox, in Denmark (DWECS 2000 survey) and Portugal (ECHP 2001 survey), data

reveal that men are more satisfied than women in their jobs.

Age

Figures on job satisfaction by age do not show an identical behaviour pattern in all countries analysed. While, in some surveys, data point to an increasing job satisfaction with age, others indicate the opposite. There are also some cases in which there is no clear connection between job satisfaction and age.

The data from surveys carried out in the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Italy, the Netherlands (POLS 2003 and NEA 2003) and Sweden suggest an increasing level of job satisfaction with age, although - as was outlined earlier in the Italian example - young well-educated workers may be more satisfied in their work than less well-educated older workers, education being the key determinant in that case. In Austria and Romania, the trend is that job satisfaction decreases with age.

In the cases of Estonia and Hungary, age does not appear to play a key role in job satisfaction.

In Spain, the highest levels of job satisfaction are found among workers aged below 19 years (54.5% of whom are very satisfied) and aged over 65 years (64.8% of whom are very satisfied).

In Portugal, workers aged between 25 and 54 years are more satisfied than their counterparts in other age groups: satisfied workers represent around 80% of the total in this group but only a maximum of 75% in the younger and older groups. However, older age groups (including those aged 55 years and over) have higher proportions of 'fully satisfied' workers (more than 5% compared with an average of 2.8%), while younger workers report higher levels of dissatisfaction - 11.3% are 'not at all satisfied' or 'largely dissatisfied' compared with an average of 6.8%.

Finally, in Bulgaria, the group of workers currently aged between 36 and 45 years shows the highest levels of dissatisfaction with their working conditions: 31% of these workers are 'not very satisfied' or 'not at all satisfied'. According to the national correspondent for Bulgaria, this group corresponds to the generation of people who endured the most negative consequences of the transition crisis during the 1990s, which affected both private and professional lives.

Marital status and parenting/number of children

Regarding job satisfaction by marital status, a recurring result in some countries is that single people are among those most - if not the most - satisfied with their jobs. This is the case in Austria, Bulgaria, Germany, Portugal ('never married' group) and Romania ('single people/unmarried').

The opposite occurs in Denmark, Italy and the Netherlands. In Denmark, single people are less content than others in their jobs; in Italy, those who are divorced and separated are the most satisfied with their job; and in the Netherlands those who never married (POLS 2003 and TAS 2004) and those who are divorced (POLS 2003) are less satisfied than other groups.

Data from the QWLS (Finland) and the OS November 2004 (Czech Republic) show no significant differences in the job satisfaction of people of different marital status.

The available information about parenting/number of children and job satisfaction is scarcer than for other job satisfaction determinants but, nevertheless, interesting results emerge from different countries.

Data from TAS 2004 (the Netherlands) and from the BPO (Romania) suggest that job satisfaction among parents increases with the number of children they have. Similarly, results from the QWLS (Finland) show that people with children comprise a higher proportion of 'very satisfied' respondents than those with no children.

According to data from the Czech Republic, 'no significant differences between respondents with and without children were found' and, in Denmark, 'no definite correlation between parenting and job satisfaction' was found. Likewise, the data from QWS 2002 (Italy) indicate that parental status does not significantly affect job satisfaction levels.

Job satisfaction and job autonomy

According to Nguyen, Taylor and Bradley (2003b), one of the variables that may be expected to influence job satisfaction is 'the degree of perceived autonomy that workers enjoy in the way they do their job'. The expected relationship is that more autonomy is associated with greater job satisfaction.

The contributions of the different national correspondents indeed seem to point in this direction, revealing some relationship between job satisfaction and job autonomy in various countries. The main trend observed is that workers who report more autonomy in their jobs also report higher levels of job satisfaction.

The Danish DWECS survey provides an interesting finding regarding the relationship between job satisfaction and job autonomy. According to its results, job decision latitude (a composite measure that can be associated with the concept of job autonomy; see Table 3) has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

Table 3 shows that, as job decision latitude decreases, fewer respondents report a high degree of job satisfaction. Almost 90% of male employees and almost 85% of female employees with high job decision latitude are satisfied to a high degree, while only about 56% of those with low job decision latitude report a high degree of job satisfaction.

Table 3: Job satisfaction and job decision latitude in Denmark, by sex, 2000 (%)

Job decision latitude	Sex	Job satisfaction			
		High	Some	Little	No
High	Men	89.51	9.69	0.40	0.40
	Women	84.95	14.64	0.21	0.21
Above average	Men	77.34	20.88	1.19	0.59
	Women	80.75	17.27	1.75	0.23
Below average	Men	67.23	28.06	2.45	2.26
	Women	67.91	26.51	3.88	1.71
Low	Men	56.26	31.80	6.62	5.32
	Women	56.28	33.25	5.50	4.97

The dimensions of job decision latitude comprise: Question B67: Do you have substantial control over your work? Always, often, sometimes, seldom and never/almost never. Question B68: Do have control over whom you work with? Always, often, sometimes, seldom and never/almost never. Question B69: Do you have control over workload? Always, often, sometimes, seldom and never/almost never. Question B70: Do you control what to do at work? Always, often, sometimes, seldom and never/almost never.

Source: DWECS 2000, cross-tabulation of question B60 on job satisfaction with four questions pertaining to job decision latitude, by sex (Denmark)

In the Netherlands, the correlations between job autonomy and job satisfaction are statistically not very significant in both the NEA and POLS, being a little stronger in the NEA survey. In both cases, people who experience more autonomy - regarding the way the work is done, the order of activities, the method of working, etc - are more satisfied with their job (Tables 4 and 5).

Table 4: Correlates of the variables on job autonomy with the variable job satisfaction, based on the POLS 2002 data (Netherlands)

	Do you enjoy your work? (1=yes, frequently - 3=no)
--	--

Set own pace of work	0.084**
Decide yourself when to take leave	0.064**
Decide yourself the way the work is done	0.111**
Decide yourself the order of work activities	0.079**
Can interrupt work at any moment (e.g. take a break)	0.040**
Can control the temperature at the workplace yourself	0.081**
Can control the ventilation at the workplace yourself	0.086**

Notes: ** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The answer categories for these items are: 1) yes, frequently; 2) yes, occasionally; 3) no.

Source: POLS 2002 (Netherlands)

Table 5: Correlates of the variables on job autonomy with the variable job satisfaction, based on the NEA 2003 data (Netherlands)

	To what extent are you satisfied with your working conditions? (1=very dissatisfied - 5=very satisfied)
Job autonomy (scale of autonomy: 1=low - 4=high)	0.164**
Do you decide yourself the way the work is done?	0.136**
Do you decide yourself the order of your work activities?	0.132**
Do you decide yourself when to do a task?	0.133**
Is your working order prescribed?	-0.112**
Can you choose your own method of working?	0.141**

Notes: ** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). The answer categories on these items are: 1) never; 2) occasionally; 3) frequently; 4) always.

Source: NEA 2003 (Netherlands)

In Finland, the data from QWLS 2003 suggest that people who are more able to influence a number of aspects of their work experience a higher general job satisfaction level. As Table 6 shows, those who stated that they can influence certain aspects of work 'a lot or quite a lot' are more satisfied with their jobs.

Table 6: General satisfaction with current job, by job autonomy in Finland, 2003 (%)

Able to influence a lot or quite a lot			Able to influence a little or not at all		
Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Rather or very dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Rather or very dissatisfied
Content of tasks	41	56	3	27	63
Sequence of tasks	36	59	5	27	63
Pace of work	37	58	5	27	64

Working methods	36	59	5	27	63
Division of tasks	42	55	3	29	63
Choice of working partners	43	54	2	30	62
Schedule of projects	43	53	4	30	62
Working hours	41	55	4	29	63

Source: *QWLS 2003 (Finland)*

Data from the Czech survey MQWL 2004 also indicate a significant correlation between different types of work autonomy and job satisfaction. Workers report greater job satisfaction when they have greater autonomy to influence the arrangement of their working hours and to choose or change the sequence of their work tasks, work methods and pace of work: 'as work autonomy increases, so does respondents' overall job satisfaction'. Table 7 shows that those who can choose or change their methods of work report a higher degree of job satisfaction.

Table 7: Cross-tabulation between job satisfaction and 'I can choose or change the way I do my work' in the Czech Republic (%)

Job satisfaction	Yes	Neutral	No	Don't know
Satisfied	74.9	55.3	56.0	36.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11.4	21.3	23.6	33.3
Dissatisfied	5.9	12.6	13.6	23.3
Don't know	7.8	10.8	6.8	6.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: *MQWL 2004, No. surveyed = 1,738, c = 0.232 (contingency coefficient), p = 0.000 (indication of statistical significance) (Czech Republic)*

Moreover, data from the Spanish SQLW 2004 show analogous results. According to these results, the more 'independent the workers are in taking their working decisions, the more satisfied they are with their job. In contrast, the less independent they are, the less satisfied they appear to be with their job' (Table 8).

Table 8: Cross-tabulation between job satisfaction and 'ability to work at one's own discretion' in Spain (%)

Degree of agreement with the possibility to work at one's own discretion	Total	Percentage distribution		
		Very satisfied	Satisfied	Little satisfied
Totally agree	100	69.0	26.5	4.1
Agree	100	56.7	36.8	4.7

Neutral	100	45.8	46.1	6.3
Disagree	100	32.8	49.1	17.1
Totally disagree	100	20.2	44	35.1

Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace (Q70/Q78.b), Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2004 (Spain)

Similar to the Czech results (Table 7), the Spanish SQLW 2004 reveals that the greater 'ability to choose or modify' certain work aspects that some workers have, the more satisfied they are with their job (Table 9). Examples of such work aspects include priority of tasks, working methodology, pace of work and work breaks.

Table 9: Cross-tabulation between job satisfaction and 'ability to choose or modify' work aspects in Spain (%)

Ability to choose or modify:	Percentage distribution				
	Total	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Little satisfied	Don't know
Priority of tasks	100	Very able	62.0	32.0	5.3
	100	Able	58.0	35.3	5.7
	100	Sometimes able	51.3	40.1	6.4
	100	Seldom able	44.2	42.2	12.3
	100	Never able	31.1	44.4	23.2
Working methodology	100	Very able	63.9	29.9	5.6
	100	Able	57.6	36.6	4.6
	100	Sometimes able	51.4	40.8	6.0
	100	Seldom able	41.5	43.7	13.4
	100	Never able	33.6	42.8	22.4
Pace of work	100	Very able	64.2	29.5	5.6
	100	Able	56.6	36.8	5.4
	100	Sometimes able	52.9	39.8	6.0
	100	Seldom able	44.1	43.5	11.0
	100	Never able	30.2	44.2	24.4
Work breaks	100	Very able	63.1	30.7	5.5
	100	Able	58.1	34.9	5.4
	100	Sometimes able	53.3	38.9	6.3
	100	Seldom able	47.5	42.5	9.0
	100	Never able	34.6	43.6	20.3

Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace (Question 79), Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2004 (Spain)

Other countries also report a positive relationship between job satisfaction and job autonomy.

In Italy, according to the report of QWS 2002, 'overall job satisfaction is positively correlated with autonomy and involvement in decision making, choice of techniques and methods, and scheduling'.

Finally, according to the Bulgarian correspondent, 'the opportunity to alternate different aspects of the work process has a moderate correlation with overall job satisfaction. It is a correlation however that is 'weaker than the correlation with income, work-life balance and fatigue, but stronger than that with education, marital and employment status'.

Job satisfaction and working time/work-life balance

One of the objectives of this report was to assess whether there is a relationship between working time and work-life balance issues and job satisfaction.

First, it should be underlined that there is an unclear relationship between working time and job satisfaction. Secondly, some results from the national correspondents' contributions indicate that there is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and working time flexibility, but a negative relationship between job satisfaction and overtime work. Thirdly, it seems that there is some relationship between work-life balance and job satisfaction.

Working time

It would be expected that job satisfaction is negatively related to working hours - that people with longer working hours would be less satisfied with their jobs than those working less hours. However, according to the contributions from Denmark and Portugal, there is in fact a positive relationship between working hours and job satisfaction. In other words, people who work more hours are more satisfied in their work (though it should be pointed out that income may mediate this relationship as higher income and longer hours are also correlated). In Denmark's case, the data from DWECS 2000 reveal that 'those working long hours report themselves more satisfied with work than those working less hours' (Table 10). This finding is also supported by the IFKA survey, which concludes that employees working more than 45 hours a week are more satisfied than employees working a standard full-time week of 37 hours.

Table 10: Job satisfaction and working time in Denmark, by sex, 2000 (%)

Working time per week	Sex	Job satisfaction			
		High	Some	Little	No
0-29 hours	Men	72.58	23.39	2.42	1.61
	Women	69.25	24.34	3.10	3.32
30-35 hours	Men	66.15	28.46	3.08	2.31
	Women	69.22	26.49	3.36	0.93
36-39 hours	Men	70.08	24.71	3.13	2.09
	Women	72.07	23.44	2.74	1.75
40-48 hours	Men	78.81	17.66	1.69	1.84
	Women	76.36	19.02	2.99	1.63
49 hours or more	Men	81.27	15.56	1.59	1.59
	Women	81.25	10.94	3.13	4.69

Source: DWECS 2000, cross-tabulation of questions B60 and B15, by sex (Denmark)

The Portuguese contribution points in the same direction, although through a non-representative survey. It reports that men in the ICT and retail sectors working part time are less satisfied with their current job in a number of aspects than those working full time. Women working in these sectors also indicated this variation in satisfaction but not to the same extent as men (see Portuguese national report).

UK researchers found that part-time workers do not appear to be more or less satisfied 'with their jobs' than full-time workers. However, female part-time workers are on average more satisfied with 'pay' and 'hours' than female full-time workers, but are less satisfied with 'the work itself'. The same research also found that men in mini-jobs (involving between one and 15 hours of work per week) were generally more satisfied with their work than men working 30-48 hours per week (except for satisfaction with 'hours worked' but this result was statistically insignificant).

Data from the Austrian special survey of autumn 2004 of the *Arbeitsklima* index - which focused on job satisfaction in relation to working time, work-life balance and income - reveal that the fewer hours people work per week, the more satisfied they are with their job. People working less than 30 hours per week have a higher index than others working longer hours. In addition, people whose weekly working time exceeds 40 hours have the lowest index record.

In Bulgaria, data from the NWCS 2005 reveal that standard working hours (30-39 and 40-44 hours per week) provide the highest rates of job satisfaction: 78% of workers are completely or fairly satisfied. Long working hours (more than 45 hours per week) increase dissatisfaction to a level of 35%-39%, compared with 19% among those working in the 30-39 hour and 40-44 hour categories.

Data from the MQWL 2004 survey, from the Czech Republic, reveal that job satisfaction does not depend on the absolute length of working hours (no statistically significant correlation was found) but depends instead on the degree to which respondents are satisfied with the amount of time they work (Table 11). Moreover, job satisfaction improves with increasing autonomy in the distribution of their working hours. It seems that those who can influence the spread of their working hours are more often satisfied with their working hours and with their job, regardless of the absolute length of their working time.

Table 11: Satisfaction with length of working hours in the Czech Republic (%)

Job satisfaction	Yes	Neutral	No	Don't know
Satisfied	71.6	52.1	42.4	36.8
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13.8	26.5	24.0	31.6
Dissatisfied	7.1	12.9	24.7	10.5
Don't know	7.4	8.5	8.8	21.1
Total	100	100	100	100

Source: MQWL 2004, No. surveyed=2,007, $c = 0.267$ (contingency coefficient), $p = 0.000$ (indication of statistical significance) (Czech Republic)

Working time flexibility and overtime work

Some of the national correspondents' contributions also presented results regarding the possible relationship between job satisfaction and the issues of working time flexibility and overtime. The main trend seems to be a positive relationship between working time flexibility and job satisfaction, while a negative relationship is found regarding overtime work.

The Spanish survey SQLW 2004 on quality of life in the workplace reveals that the more flexibility workers have

to decide when to start or leave their work, the more satisfied they are with their job. In contrast, the percentage of dissatisfied workers increases as their flexibility is reduced. Similarly, data from the Finnish QWLS 2003 show that workers who can adapt their working hours to match their own needs are more satisfied than those who cannot avail of such flexibility options.

Regarding overtime work, it could be expected that it would have a negative effect on job satisfaction. Data from the Spanish SQLW 2004 and the Finnish QWLS 2003 point in that direction but the Danish findings indicate the opposite trend.

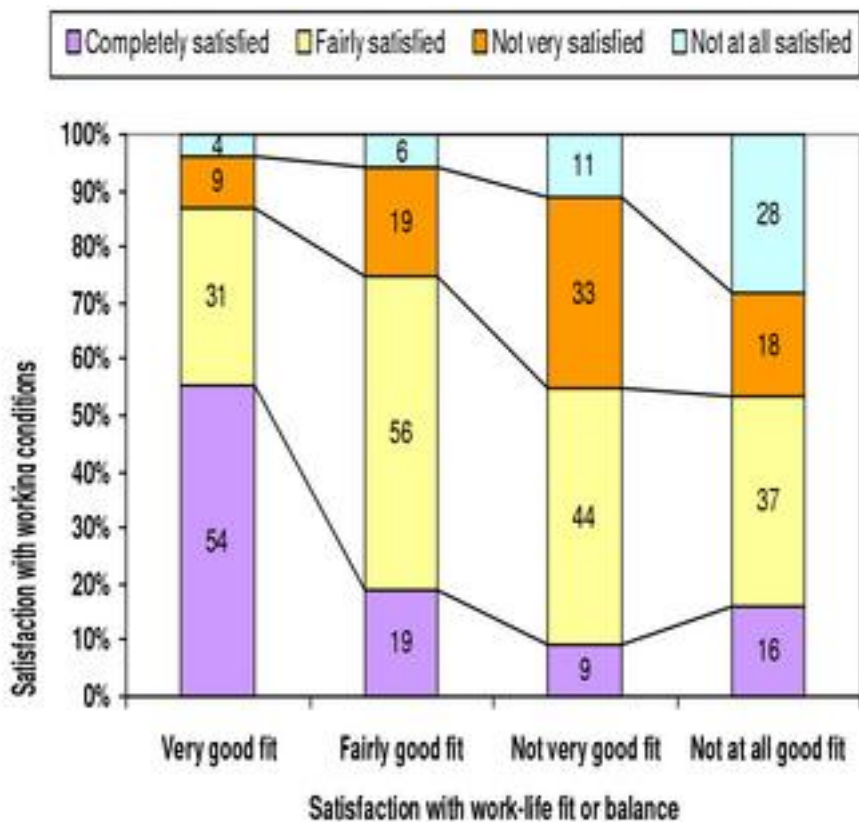
The Spanish SQLW 2004 data show that the less the workers need to work overtime, the more satisfied they are with their job. Conversely, satisfaction among workers decreases the more they need to work overtime. The Finnish QWLS 2003 survey data also reveal that workers who have to do more overtime work than they would like to are less satisfied with their jobs.

However, data from DWECS 2000 reveal that the more overtime work demanded, the more satisfied men become - 79% of those who ‘always’ requested to work overtime are satisfied to a ‘high degree’ (note that relatively few female respondents can be found among those ‘always’ having to work overtime). This finding raises the question of whether the necessity to work overtime is perceived by the respondents in a traditional sense of requested overtime work or as part of a ‘work as a way of life’ outlook.

Work-life balance

According to the latest data available in Bulgaria, there is a relationship between satisfaction with working conditions and with work-life balance. Some 85% of respondents reporting a very good work-life balance are also satisfied with their working conditions. Among the employees reporting a ‘not very good/not at all good fit’, the proportion of satisfied workers with their working conditions falls to 53% (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Satisfaction with working conditions and with work-life balance in Bulgaria



In the Czech Republic, data from the MQWL 2004 reveal a statistically significant correlation between job satisfaction and the answers agreeing with the sentence 'In my organisation, employees are able to maintain a healthy balance between their working and family life' (Table 12). Those respondents who agreed with the statement were more often satisfied with their job (78.3%), whereas respondents who disagreed with it were much less satisfied in their work (31.2%).

Table 12: 'In my organisation, employees are able to maintain a healthy balance between their working and family life' - Czech Republic (%)

Job satisfaction	Yes	Neutral	No	Don't know
Satisfied	78.3	53.8	31.2	46.3
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	11.0	27.7	20.6	22.5
Dissatisfied	4.0	11.1	37.6	16.9
Don't know	6.7	7.4	10.6	14.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: MQWL 2004, No. surveyed=2,007, $c=0.388$; $a=0.000$ (Czech Republic)

In the case of Denmark, the data from DWECS 2000 reveal that the group of respondents stating that work affects their private life 'in a very bad way' are the most discontent with work (Table 13). Conversely, among those workers reporting that work affects their private life in a 'good' or 'very good' way, the levels of job dissatisfaction are almost non-existent.

Table 13: Job satisfaction and work-life balance in Denmark, by sex, 2000 (%)

How does work affect your private life?	Sex	Job satisfaction			
		High	Some	Little	No
In a very good way	Men	95.37	4.63	0.00	0.00
	Women	93.46	6.45	0.00	0.00
In a good way	Men	84.31	14.31	0.80	0.58
	Women	80.26	18.54	0.81	0.40
Not at all	Men	65.36	30.14	2.77	1.73
	Women	64.31	30.35	2.89	2.46
In a bad way	Men	52.00	33.18	8.71	6.12
	Women	45.35	36.06	12.68	5.92
In a very bad way	Men	40.00	20.00	0.00	40.00
	Women	21.74	34.78	13.04	30.43

Source: DWECS 2000, cross-tabulation of questions B60 and B108, by sex, (Denmark)

Job satisfaction and worker participation

According to the survey data from Spain, Finland and the Czech Republic, job satisfaction seems to increase with worker participation or involvement in the organisation where they work. Data from the Spanish SQLW 2004 clearly show that the more workers are able to participate in working decisions, the more satisfied they are with their job (Table 14).

Table 14: Cross-tabulation between job satisfaction and ‘participation in working decisions’ in Spain (%)

Degree of agreement with the possibility to participate in working decisions	Total	Very satisfied	Satisfied	Little satisfied	Don't know/NA
Totally agree	100	67.1	27.0	5.5	0.6
Agree	100	56.5	37.4	5.1	1.0
Neutral	100	46.3	45.2	6.6	2.0
Disagree	100	34.3	50.7	13.5	1.5
Totally disagree	100	22.5	45.9	30.8	0.9

Source: Survey on quality of life in the workplace (Questions 70 and 78.g), Spanish Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2004 (Spain)

Similarly, data from the Finnish QWLS 2003 also indicate that workers who are ‘at least sometimes able to take part in the planning of own work’ or ‘able to apply own ideas in work’ are significantly more satisfied or less dissatisfied than those who are ‘never’ able to contribute to their work in this way (Table 15).

Table 15: General satisfaction with current job, according to worker participation in Finland (%)

	At least sometimes			Never		
	Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Rather or very dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Quite satisfied	Rather or very dissatisfied
Able to take part in the planning of own work	34	60	6	23	61	16
Able to apply own ideas in work	33	61	6	24	56	20

Source: QWLS 2003 (Finland)

In addition, data from the Czech MQWL 2004 survey also confirm that workers who are ‘encouraged to come up with new and better ways of doing things’, whose ‘boss promotes open communication with subordinates’ and who work in a department that welcomes and openly discusses different opinions are more satisfied in their job than other workers (Table 16).

Table 16: Satisfied workers, according to their work participation in the Czech Republic (%)

	Yes	Neutral	No	Don't know	Total
I feel encouraged	81.3	55.8	34.0	53.9	63.0

to come up with new and better ways of doing things					
Different opinions in our department are welcomed and openly discussed	81.3	63.1	32.3	48.4	63.0
My boss promotes open communication with subordinates	76.4	51.9	25.2	47.3	63.0

Source: MQWL 2004, No. surveyed=2,007 (Czech Republic)

Research on job satisfaction

This section provides some results from the most recent research carried out in the 16 participating countries regarding the job satisfaction issue. Brief examples are given of conceptual analysis of job satisfaction, methodological aspects of measuring job satisfaction, and analysis of job satisfaction and its correlations. For all of the examples, the individual national reports provide more complete information.

Reliability and validity of measuring instruments

A research piece from the Netherlands (Saane, Sluiter, Verbeek and Frings-Dresen, 2003), comprising a systematic review of different instruments used to measure job satisfaction in hospitals, concluded that only a few of these instruments have shown both high reliability and validity. Assessing the internal consistency, construct validity and responsiveness of these instruments, researchers concluded that, from the 29 instruments analysed, only seven of them were reliable and valid enough to assess job satisfaction in hospital environments (Table 17).

Table 17: Job satisfaction instruments

Name	Items	Answer scale	Factors assessed
Job in General Scale	18 items	Three answer categories (yes, ?, no)	General job satisfaction
Andrew and Withney Job Satisfaction Questionnaire	Five items	Seven-point Likert scale (from 1 - delighted to 7 - not at all satisfied)	General job satisfaction
Job Satisfaction Survey	Multidimensional instrument (nine subheadings, unknown number of items)	Six-point Likert scale (from 1 - disagree to 6 - agree very much)	Salary, promotion, supervision, fringe benefits, contingent rewards, operating procedures, co-workers, work and communication
Emergency Physician Job Satisfaction Scale	79 item multidimensional instrument	Seven-point Likert scale (from -3 - strongly disagree to 3 - strongly agree)	General job satisfaction and administrative autonomy, clinical autonomy, resources, social relationships, lifestyle and challenges

McClosky/Mueller Satisfaction Scale	31 item multidimensional instrument	Five-point Likert scale (from 1 - very dissatisfied to 5 - very satisfied)	Extrinsic rewards, scheduling satisfaction, work-life balance, co-workers, interaction, professional opportunities, praise/recognition and control/responsibility
Measure of Job Satisfaction	38 item multidimensional instrument	Five-point Likert scale (from 1 - very dissatisfied to 5 - very satisfied)	Personnel satisfaction, workload, professional support, salary, and prospects and training
Nurse Satisfaction Scale	24 item multidimensional scale	Seven-point Likert scale (from 1 - strongly agree to 7 - strongly disagree)	Administration, co-workers, career, patient care, relations with supervisor, nursing education and communication

Source: Adapted from national contribution (Netherlands)

These findings imply that not all of the instruments used to gauge job satisfaction are reliable and valid for that purpose. They also seem to underline that there is no unique instrument to measure job satisfaction. As Table 17 indicates, one may assess job satisfaction using different numbers of items and different answer scales.

The 'job enjoyment' approach

The Finnish QWLS provides an interesting methodological approach to job satisfaction. Instead of asking whether respondents are satisfied with their job or to what extent they are satisfied with their job, it enquires about respondents' opinions regarding factors that make their work more or less enjoyable. This approach thus allows researchers to study and conclude which factors increase or decrease job satisfaction.

Work autonomy ('independence of work') is the factor that mostly makes the respondent's current job enjoyable, mentioned by some 74% of male and 71% of female wage and salary earners (Lehto and Sutela, 2005, p. 84).

Since 1984, the factor of 'pleasant customers' has been mentioned more frequently as something that increases enjoyment at work, while 'certainty of employment relationship' has diminished in importance.

In the same period, more people mention 'time pressure and tight deadlines', 'difficult customers', 'uncertainty about continuity of work', 'relations with superiors' and 'enforced pace of work' as the factors decreasing enjoyment at work (mentioned by around half of survey respondents in 1997 and 2003). 'Lack of advancement and development opportunities' is less cited as a factor that decreases work enjoyment.

Factors influencing job satisfaction

The UK national contribution, following Rose's approach, addresses some possible factors contributing to job satisfaction.

Rose (2003) analysed a number of possible influences on job satisfaction including individual well-being, working hours, work orientation, financial variables, the employment contract, and market and job mobility. His findings fail to provide strong support for explanations of job satisfaction primarily in terms of socio-technical rewards of the job, although low influence in the workplace did emerge as a significant factor. All but one of the indirect measures developed to represent qualitative features of the workplace remained statistically insignificant, the measure of workplace influence being the exception.

Much more important were factors related to the contractual features of the job. Having the 'right package' - contractually assured promotion opportunities, annual pay increments, bonuses and, above all, a job that was regarded as permanent - significantly boosted the job satisfaction score, with a marginal increment for not having to work unpaid overtime. There was also little support for the view that job satisfaction rises in a closely linear association with earnings; rather, jobs enabling financial expectations - at whatever level these were set - to be met, were more important. Having a recognised career path was also a highly significant factor relating to job satisfaction. High levels of work stress and a desire to work fewer hours - an aspiration held by a third of the sample of respondents - together accounted for well over a half of a standard deviation in job satisfaction scores.

The key point that Rose makes (echoed in his more recent publication, (Rose 2005)) is that his conclusions are not intended to demonstrate that intrinsic rewards do not matter in analysing job satisfaction. However, they may matter significantly less than is sometimes assumed once a greater range of influences is introduced. What is needed is an expansion of the range of causality. Differences in job satisfaction between groups and individuals are extremely complex and require more research, especially in relation to the measures used to gauge job satisfaction. In the UK, the need to control for workplace influences and to gather more reliable survey data on quality of working life issues are seen as two critical areas to address.

Job satisfaction as an indicator of job quality

Although job satisfaction emerged as an indicator of job quality, proposed by the European Council in 2001, as was outlined at the start of this report, a Spanish research paper (Llorente and Macías, 2003) concluded that there is little or no correlation between job satisfaction and job quality.

Two approaches were followed in this paper in order to assess the adequacy of using job satisfaction as an indicator of the quality of work. First, using the ISSP of 1997, the authors explored whether differences between countries in terms of job satisfaction can be explained by job quality-related variables, such as working time, wages, etc. Secondly, using the Spanish SQLW 2000 as a case study, the authors studied the relationship between certain objective measures of job quality and job satisfaction.

In both cases, 'job satisfaction has no apparent relevant relation to other objective indicators of job quality, which makes this indicator of little adequacy for evaluating job quality' (Llorente and Macías, 2003).

Paradoxically, in a context of pronounced objective differences in quality among jobs, the authors found a coexistence of high levels of job satisfaction, with only a small range of variation between the maximum and minimum levels of job satisfaction.

In order to explain this paradox, two possible response mechanisms to situations of job dissatisfaction were put forward. The first would be the process through which workers who are dissatisfied with their job tend to leave it and look for a better job. This process would culminate in those workers finding a more suitable job, and thus raising their level of job satisfaction. The second mechanism refers to those cases, suggested earlier, in which workers cannot find a more suitable job and must change and adapt their work expectations to the type of job available. This process of adaptation could lead to an increase in their declared level of job satisfaction.

Commentary

In the context of the European effort to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world and with the strong emphasis on the creation of 'better jobs' throughout Europe, job satisfaction was indicated as one of several indicators in the measurement framework for quality in work proposed by the European Commission. In fact, job satisfaction has been directly or indirectly addressed in national surveys of all the countries covered in this comparative analytical report, in some cases since 1990. However, the diversity of methods used to gauge job satisfaction clearly indicates that there is no common understanding of the term between the various countries.

Looking at the relationship between job satisfaction and some individual and some work-related variables provides certain significant clues regarding the importance of the concept of job satisfaction within the working conditions

domain.

The most recent data available from the countries contributing to this comparative analytical report reveal high levels of general or overall job satisfaction, except in Romania. Education and job security are the factors showing the strongest correlation with job satisfaction. People who are better educated and hold permanent job contracts are more satisfied than others. Conversely, a clear relation with the level of job satisfaction did not emerge in terms of employment, sex, age and marital status of respondents. For example, the so-called gender/job satisfaction paradox was confirmed by data from some countries but contradicted by data from others.

From the proposed independent work-related issues, job autonomy emerged as having a strong and clear correlation with job satisfaction: more autonomy in a job leads to higher job satisfaction among respondents. Workers' participation or involvement in the organisation where they work is also positively correlated with job satisfaction: more possibilities to participate in working decisions imply greater job satisfaction among workers.

There is an unclear relationship between working time and job satisfaction. Job satisfaction is, however, positively related to working time flexibility. It is also evident that work-life balance has a similarly positive relation with job satisfaction. Workers with more flexibility in their working time and with a better work-life balance are more satisfied with their jobs. On the other hand, working overtime is negatively related to job satisfaction.

Job satisfaction may seem to be an intuitive concept that is easily understood, but the diversity of recent research on job satisfaction, also indicated in the national contributions to this comparative analytical report, still raises conceptual and methodological debates. Although this may highlight the topical interest of this issue, it also calls for further and more in-depth research into job satisfaction. A common framework involving both job satisfaction conceptual approaches and measurement methodologies would be a step forward in improving working conditions surveys.

List of acronyms

ACОВI - Living Conditions Survey - Romania

AKI - *Arbeitsklima* Index (Work Climate Index) - Austria

BHPS - British Household Panel Survey - United Kingdom

BIBB/IAB - Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training and the Institute for Employment Research - Germany

BPO - Barometer of Public Opinion - Romania

DQL - Diagnosis of the Quality of Life - Romania

DWECS - Danish Work Environment Cohort Study - Denmark

ECHP - European Community Household Panel

EIBS - Employment in Britain Survey - United Kingdom

EWCS - European Working Conditions Survey

GSOEP - German Socio-Economic Panel Study - Germany

IFKA - Job Satisfaction Barometer - Denmark

MQWL - Measuring the Quality of Working Life - Czech Republic

NEA - Netherlands Working Conditions Survey (*Nationale Enquête Arbeidsomstandigheden*) - Netherlands

NORBALT - Living conditions survey - Estonia

NSWC - National Survey of Working Conditions - Spain

NWCS - National Working Conditions Survey - Bulgaria

OS - Our Society Survey - Czech Republic

POLS - Permanent Quality of Life Survey (*Permanent Onderzoek Leef Situatie*) - Netherlands

QWLS - Quality of Work Life Survey - Finland

QWS - Quality of Work Survey (*Le Caratteristiche e la Qualità del Lavoro in Italia*) - Italy

SQLW - Survey on quality of life in the workplace - Spain

SUMER - SUMER Survey (*Your opinion on your work situation*) - France

TAS - TNO Working Situation Survey (*TNO Arbeid Survey*) - Netherlands

ULF Survey - Survey of Living Conditions - Sweden

WERS - Workplace Employment Relations Surveys - United Kingdom

WES - Work Environment Survey - Sweden

WIBS - Working in Britain Survey - United Kingdom

WLB - Working Life Barometer - Estonia

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