

QUESTIONNAIRE EWCO CAR ON IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON WORKING CONDITIONS: THE NETHERLANDS

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In The Netherlands there is some impact of the crisis on working conditions. Career prospects, mobility, wages, and working hours decreased, and job insecurity increased. Male, young, and low educated employees and employees in profit sectors mostly strongly feel the effects of the crisis. Many fired employees became independent contractor, or entered the disability or unemployment benefit system. The government took action in 2008 by supporting working time reduction with unemployment benefit money, but long term socioeconomic problems such as ageing, insufficient pension funding and labour market participation, suppress the attention for the crisis.

1. General trends in working conditions

1.1 Basic trend data on selected working conditions indicators

Please describe the evolution in working conditions based on the available national information (**surveys, administrative data, other data bases**), over the requested period 2007-2011. Please note that the period you should refer to can differ from 2007-2011 if the available information at the national level do not allow referring to such a period. However, the chosen period should allow comparing the situation before and after the crisis (e.g. 2006-2009, 2005-2010, etc.). Some of the information might be based on objective indicators while others describe the evolution in the (subjective) perception of working conditions by workers, based on available surveys at national, sectoral or regional level over requested period.

Figures and tables should relate to the following items:

Employment conditions:

Data mainly originate from the Netherlands Working Conditions Survey. This is a since 2005 yearly held postal survey among a representative sample of 80,000 employees in The Netherlands. Every year more than 23,000 people respond (30%). Questions include demographics, employment and working conditions, health, work relations and terms of employment, sickness absence, occupational accidents, and labour market behaviour.

Table 1.1a: Careers prospects and job mobility (e.g. self-reported career advancement, job-to-job mobility) (Source: Netherlands Working Conditions Survey 2007-2011)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Promotion in the past two years (% agree)	16.1%	18.3%	15.9%	15.8%	15.1%
Job change in past two years (% agree)	21.0%	21.5%	20.1%	18.9%	18.2%
Job requirements expanded in past two	44.7%	44.0%	43.5%	42.3%	42.6%

years (% agree)					
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Career prospects and job requirements (change and extension of the job content) decreased from 2009. This is significant since 2010.

The possible selection effect of the number of workers with parents born in other western and non-western countries may be due to a change in the sampling method process from 2009.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Dutch parents *)	83.7%	83.5%	82.2%	82.4%	82.0%
Parents from other western countries *)	8.3%	8.1%	8.5%	8.5%	8.7%
Parents from other non-western countries *)	7.9%	8.4%	9.2%	9.1%	9.3%

*) differences may be due to a different sampling method from 2009

National background of employees is used to indicate migration flows.

No significant effects are found; in 2009 a different sampling method included more migrants in the sample.

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Risk of losing the job (% agree)	16.7%	17.3%	22.8%	20.4%	22.4%
Worries about keeping the job (% agree)	16.4%	18.2%	22.7%	22.3%	25.4%
Contemplated another job in past year (% agree)	50.5%	48.8%	46.1%	46.2%	46.0%
Took action to get another job in past year (% agree)	26.0%	25.8%	23.6%	22.7%	23.9%
Prefers to keep job in forthcoming 5 years (% agree)	62.2%	65.4%	64.9%	63.3%	62.9%

Job insecurity increased from 2009, but less employees evaluated the risk of losing the job in 2010.

Less employees contemplated or took action to get another job since 2009.

In the years 2008 and 2009 more employees preferred to keep the job. This decreased in the last two years.

Working time and work intensity:

Survey 2007-2011)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Average number of working hours per week *)	31.8	31.6	30.9	30.6	30.3
Preferred number of working hours per week	30.9	31.0	30.5	30.3	30.3
Overtime: number of hours per week	3.56	3.58	3.35	3.38	3.38
Average retirement age change (source CBS Statline)	61.7	62.0	62.5	62.7	63.1
Shift work (% agree)	14.6%	15.3%	15.8%	15.9%	16.3%
Works in the evening and at night (% agree)	50.8%	51.0%	50.7%	50.8%	51.3%
Works in the weekend (% agree)	53.1%	54.1%	54.4%	54.7%	55.2%
High work speed (1=no, 3=regularly, 2 items)	2.20	2.17	2.17	2.19	2.15
High work load (1=never, 4=always, 4 items)	2.32	2.31	2.31	2.32	2.31

*) differences may be due to a different sampling method since 2009

- The average number of working hours dropped since 2009. It is not likely that these differences are due to a different sampling method since 2009, because the decrease continued after 2009. Also the preferred number of working hours and the number of overtime hours decreased from 2009.
- The average retirement age change is derived from the website of the Dutch Central Bureau for Statistics. It appears that the average retirement age is increasing. This is not due to the economic crisis, but to the government policy of increasing retirement to the age of 67 to keep the pension system affordable.
- Shift work increased gradually during the five years. The number of employees that work in the evening and at night did not change, but the number of employees working regularly in the weekend also gradually increased over the last five years.
- Work intensity is measured by work speed (high speed, high time pressure) and work load (high speed, much work to do, working hard, work hectic). Both indicators do not change much during the last five years.

Health and wellbeing at work:

Table 1.4: Health and wellbeing at work (Source: Netherlands Working Conditions Survey 2007-2011)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Standardised incidence rate of accidents at work 1)	2,692	2,703	2,498	2,598	2,410
Standardised incidence rate of occupational diseases 2)	-	-	336	260	-
Sickness absence complaints mainly due to work	9.3%	8.6%	7.9%	8.1%	8.4%
Sickness absence complaints partly due to work	14.4%	13.9%	13.6%	14.5%	13.8%
Absenteeism percentage part-time work corrected	4.2%	4.1%	4.0%	4.2%	4.3%
Number of days of sickness leave per year per	7.7	7.5	7.2	7.6	7.7

employee					
Spell frequency per year	1.12	1.18	1.13	1.10	1.10
Percentage of employees with absence in past year	49.6%	52.1%	51.7%	49.9%	49.2%
Burnout score (1=never, 7=every day, 5 items)	1.95	1.99	1.99	2.06	1.99
Percentage of employees with burnout score above 3.2	11.3%	12.4%	12.6%	13.1%	12.8%
Conflict with colleagues in past year (% agree)	27.5%	27.1%	26.0%	25.9%	25.5%
Conflict with direct superior in past year (% agree)	20.4%	19.2%	18.4%	17.5%	18.5%
Conflict with employer in past year (% agree)	11.2%	11.0%	10.8%	10.6%	10.7%
External aversive behaviour (including bullying) 3)	24.3%	23.9%	24.5%	23.2%	24.1%
Internal aversive behaviour (including bullying) 3)	17.0%	16.2%	16.4%	14.8%	15.9%
Violence by externals (1=no, 2=yes)	1.07	1.07	1.08	1.08	1.07
Violence by internals (1=no, 2=yes)	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01
Satisfied with work (1=no, 5=yes very)	3.84	3.85	3.86	3.87	3.85
Satisfied with working conditions (1=no, 5=yes very)	3.73	3.78	3.76	3.81	3.76

1) more than 3 days lost per 100,000 employees; 2) per 100,000 employee years, source: Netherlands Centre for Occupational Diseases NCvB; 3) percentage sometimes or more often.

- Occupational accidents dropped in the last five years, in particular in 2009.
- The work relatedness of health complaints causing absenteeism was lowest in 2009 and tends to increase in 2010.
- Absenteeism at work was lowest in 2009 and increases in 2010 and 2011. This is the case with the absenteeism percentage and the number of days of sickness leave. But the spell frequency and the percentage of employees with at least one absence episode in the past year decreased in 2010 and 2011. Presenteeism is not measured.
- Stress effects are measured by a burnout score and is highest in 2010. Conflicts and problems at work seem to decrease.
- Job satisfaction and satisfaction with the working conditions was highest in 2010.

Work-life balance indicators

Table 1.5: Work-life balance indicators (Source: Netherlands Working Conditions Survey 2007-2011)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Neglect family life due to work (1=never, 4=very often)	1.31	1.31	1.31	1.31	1.31
Neglect work due to family life (1=never, 4=very often)	1.64	1.62	1.62	1.60	1.60

- Working life was less neglected because of the family life whereas the influence of work on private life was reported to be equal.

Other working conditions relevant indicators (reference to training and wages should cover more recent years, as they have been already investigated by CARs)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Percentage of employees with internal education	56.6%	58.7%	56.4%	56.6%	56.7%
Percentage of employees with external education *)	43.5%	44.4%	43.1%	42.7%	42.2%
Indexation wage costs per hour (2006=100) **)	103.2	106.3	107.8	108.7	110.3
Wage costs per hour in € (incl. social fee employer **)	28.2	28.9	29.8	30.2	30.7
Wage per hour in € **)	22.1	22.7	23.3	23.6	23.9

**) paid by employer; **) source CBS Statline December 6, 2012, figures from 2010 and 2011 are tentative*

- In company training and education was highest in 2008.
- External training and education was also highest in 2008, and dropped increasingly in the following years.
- Wages originate from the Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics. There is an increase in all years, but the increase is lower in 2010 and 2011. The indexation shows already a reduced increase in 2009.

1.2 Composite indicator of job quality

If composite indicators of job quality are available on a national level, please give the evolution over the requested period and comment on the trend data. Examples are: Gute Arbeit in Deutschland, Arbeitsklima-index in Austria, Workability Monitor in Belgium...

There is no composite indicator in The Netherlands, but the question 'How satisfied are you, generally speaking, with your work?' in table 1.4 may be considered a good indicator. Job satisfaction did not change considerably over the last five years, but was highest in 2010.

2. Social differentiation/segmentation in the trends

2.1 Highlight what are the key particular differences between groups of workers in relation to the trends provided in section 1:

- Gender (male, female)

	Gender	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Risk of losing the job (% agree)	Female	14.6%	15.1%	18.9%	17.5%	20.0%

	Male	18.3%	18.7%	25.6%	22.3%	24.4%
Worries about keeping the job (% agree)	Female	15.7%	16.4%	20.0%	20.5%	23.4%
	Male	16.9%	19.2%	24.1%	23.4%	26.8%
Sickness absence complaints mainly due to work	Female	7.1%	6.4%	6.6%	6.6%	7.1%
	Male	11.1%	10.3%	9.1%	9.4%	9.5%
Absenteeism (percentage corrected for part-time work)	Female	5.1%	4.9%	4.6%	4.7%	4.9%
	Male	3.5%	3.5%	3.6%	3.8%	3.9%
Satisfied with work (1=no, 5=yes very)	Female	3.86	3.86	3.90	3.90	3.88
	Male	3.83	3.84	3.83	3.86	3.84
Percentage with external education 1)	Female	39.2%	39.7%	38.3%	39.4%	38.1%
	Male	48.1%	48.9%	47.7%	46.2%	47.1%

1) paid by employer

- The change in the perceived risk of losing the job, was the same for men and women.
- Sickness absence complaints mainly due to work decreased more strongly among men from 2009 compared to women.
- The absenteeism percentage dropped slightly for women in the first two years and rose again from 2009, whereas for men it showed a slight increase.
- Satisfaction with work was almost equal for men and women except in 2009 where it was (temporarily) lower for men as compared to women.
- Men participated more in external education paid by the employer from 2009 onwards, whereas this percentage remained stable at a lower level for women.
- **Age (younger, older workers)**

Table 2.2: Key particular differences related to age (Source: Netherlands Working Conditions Survey 2007-2011)

	Age	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Promotion in the past two years (% agree)	15-29	23.2%	26.6%	22.1%	22.2%	21.8%
	30-49	17.0%	19.5%	17.2%	16.7%	15.6%
	50-64	7.8%	8.7%	7.4%	7.4%	7.9%
Risk of losing the job (% agree)	15-29	14.4%	14.8%	21.6%	17.8%	19.1%
	30-49	16.4%	17.1%	22.5%	20.0%	22.4%
	50-64	18.3%	18.6%	22.8%	21.7%	24.5%
Action to get another jobs in past year (% agree)	15-29	29.7%	29.9%	27.6%	27.1%	27.5%
	30-49	29.0%	29.0%	25.6%	24.6%	26.3%
	50-64	16.6%	16.4%	15.6%	14.8%	15.9%

Average number of working hours per week 1)	15-29	29.6	29.3	26.9	25.9	25.1
	30-49	31.9	32.3	32.1	32.0	32.0
	50-64	31.9	31.6	31.7	31.4	31.3
Works in the weekend (% agree)	15-29	65.7%	66.4%	67.8%	69.7%	71.2%
	30-49	52.3%	53.7%	52.8%	52.5%	52.4%
	50-64	44.1%	44.0%	45.2%	45.3%	46.7%
Standardised incidence rate of work accidents 2)	15-29	2.790	2.429	2.090	1.997	1.689
	30-49	2.492	2.545	2.357	2.701	2.396
	50-64	2.676	2.907	2.929	2.710	2.761
Percentage with external education 3)	15-29	39.3%	40.2%	36.7%	35.1%	34.7%
	30-49	47.9%	48.1%	48.4%	48.3%	48.0%
	50-64	39.8%	41.6%	39.7%	40.6%	40.4%

1) differences may be due to a different sampling method from 2009; 2) more than 3 days lost per 100,000 employees; 3) paid by employer

- Overall age effects are small regarding the indicators of this paragraph.
- Promotion dropped most strongly in the middle age group in the last three years.
- The risk of losing the job was estimated high in 2009 by all age groups. This reduced somewhat in 2010 but rose again in 2011.
- Taking action to find another job diminished in the young and middle age groups since 2009 and less strongly in the oldest age group.
- The number of working hours per week dropped since 2009 only in the youngest age group. Also the preferred number of working hours and overtime dropped most in this group since 2009 (not in the table).
- The percentage of the youngest group of employees that work regularly or incidentally in the weekend rose constantly from 2007.
- The accident rate dropped strongly in the youngest age group in all years since 2007.
- External education dropped in the youngest age group since 2009.
- **Occupational or skill class (low, middle, high)**

Occupational skill is not operationalized in our dataset. We use educational level (instead of occupational skill since we do not have that info) because there generally is a high correlation between occupational level and educational level in The Netherlands.

Table 2.3: Key particular differences related to educational level (Educ.) (Source: Netherlands Working Conditions Survey 2007-2011)

	Educ.	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Promotion	Low	11.6%	16.4%	11.5%	11.2%	12.2%
	Middle	16.1%	17.0%	15.4%	14.6%	13.8%
	High	18.6%	21.0%	19.5%	19.7%	17.9%

Function change	Low	16.4%	18.3%	14.9%	13.7%	14.2%
	Middle	20.7%	20.5%	20.1%	18.3%	16.8%
	High	24.5%	25.3%	24.0%	23.3%	22.7%
Risk of losing the job (% agree)	Low	17.5%	17.6%	22.3%	19.3%	20.6%
	Middle	15.8%	16.2%	22.0%	19.4%	20.9%
	High	16.6%	17.4%	22.9%	21.2%	25.2%
Average number of working hours per week *)	Low	30.8	30.4	29.1	28.6	28.0
	Middle	30.6	30.3	29.8	29.4	29.3
	High	33.0	33.6	33.3	33.1	33.0
Percentage of employees with internal education	Low	31.5%	34.6%	31.7%	30.6%	30.4%
	Middle	41.4%	41.9%	41.8%	41.2%	41.2%
	High	56.3%	55.8%	55.0%	54.5%	53.8%

*) differences may be due to a different sampling method from 2009

- There are many employees with promotion in the lowest educational level in 2008. The same picture is seen in changing and increasing job requirements.
- This risk of losing the job is high among the highly educated employees in 2011.
- The average number of working hours per week dropped constantly from 2007 in the low and middle educational groups, not in the high educational group. The preferred number of working hours followed this trend.
- The percentage of employees with external education increased in 2008 among low educated employees. There was no effect for internal education.
- **Wage category (low-paid, high-paid): not measured**
- **Economic sector (industry, service, etc..)**
- Economic sector is divided in profit, non-profit and partly profit/non-profit.

Table 2.4: Key particular differences related to economic sector (profit and non-profit)
(Source: Netherlands Working Conditions Survey 2007-2011)

	Sector	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Promotion in the past two years (% agree)	Profit	17.7%	19.8%	16.7%	16.5%	15.5%
	Non-pr	13.1%	15.3%	14.0%	13.7%	13.5%
Job requirements changed past 2 years (% agree)	Profit	20.9%	21.2%	19.2%	18.3%	17.2%
	Non-pr	20.9%	21.7%	21.0%	19.4%	19.2%
Risk of losing the job (% agree)	Profit	17.1%	18.9%	26.5%	21.9%	22.7%
	Non-pr	15.4%	13.8%	15.9%	17.1%	21.3%
Worries about keeping the job (% agree)	Profit	16.8%	19.8%	25.6%	23.7%	25.8%

	Non-pr	15.4%	14.7%	16.3%	19.3%	24.2%
Prefers to keep job in next 5 years (% agree)	Profit	61.4%	64.1%	62.8%	61.9%	61.5%
	Non-pr	64.0%	66.4%	68.2%	66.3%	66.5%
Average number of working hours per week 1)	Profit	33.3	33.1	31.9	31.7	31.4
	Non-pr	28.7	28.8	28.8	28.3	28.4
Preferred number of working hours per week	Profit	32.2	32.2	31.4	31.2	31.2
	Non-pr	28.2	28.7	28.6	28.5	28.5
Work in evening and at night (% agree)	Profit	50.3%	49.5%	49.5%	50.2%	50.8%
	Non-pr	51.3%	53.5%	53.0%	51.7%	52.4%
Works in the weekend (% agree)	Profit	54.5%	54.5%	55.7%	56.9%	57.7%
	Non-pr	51.0%	53.6%	53.2%	51.5%	51.5%
High work speed (1=no, 3=regularly, 2 items)	Profit	2.19	2.15	2.16	2.17	2.14
	Non-pr	2.21	2.20	2.21	2.20	2.17
Satisfied working conditions (1=no, 5=yes very)	Profit	3.73	3.78	3.75	3.79	3.75
	Non-pr	3.73	3.79	3.80	3.86	3.79
Satisfied with work (1=no, 5=yes very)	Profit	3.81	3.82	3.82	3.83	3.82
	Non-pr	3.89	3.89	3.93	3.95	3.92
Percentage employees with external education 2)	Profit	41.2%	42.3%	40.9%	39.8%	39.3%
	Non-pr	47.6%	48.1%	47.3%	47.6%	48.2%

1) differences may be due to a different sampling method from 2009; 2) paid by employer

- Promotion in the past two years was highest in the profit sectors in 2008.
- The job requirements dropped most strongly in the profit sectors after 2008.
- The risk of losing the job and worrying about losing the job was high from 2008 to 2010 in the profit sectors with a peak in 2009.
- The preference to keep the job in the next 5 years dropped in the profit sectors from 2008 and in the non-profit sectors from 2009.
- The average number of working hours per week dropped in the profit sectors from 2008 and in the non-profit sectors from 2009.
- The preferred number of working hours per week dropped in the profit sectors from 2008 but not in the non-profit sectors.
- Work in evening and at night increased in the non-profit sectors in 2008 and 2009, but dropped in the profit sector in 2008 and 2009, the opposite trend is seen in working in the weekend.

- Work speed dropped in the profit sectors in 2008 and 2009, not in the non-profit sectors.
- Satisfaction with the working circumstances was higher in the non-profit sector in 2009, 2010 and 2011, with a peak in 2010. This is also seen, but to a lesser extent, in satisfaction with the work.
- The percentage of employees with external education was higher in 2008 in the profit sectors.
- **Geographical area (for example: urban/rural areas or regions)**

Geographical area is divided in urban (Noord-Holland, Zuid-Holland, Zeeland, Utrecht, Flevoland) and rural (Groningen, Friesland, Drenthe, Overijssel, Gelderland, Noord-Brabant, Limburg). Urban is globally the western part and rural the Northern, Eastern and Southern parts of The Netherlands.

	Region	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Contemplated another job in past year (% agree)	Urban	48.9%	46.8%	43.4%	44.0%	44.4%
	Rural	51.5%	50.7%	48.2%	47.1%	46.1%
Took action another job in past year (% agree)	Urban	25.2%	24.0%	22.1%	22.0%	22.6%
	Rural	26.2%	27.4%	24.6%	22.9%	24.4%
Overtime: number of hours per week	Urban	3.44	3.51	3.29	3.41	3.38
	Rural	3.60	3.62	3.40	3.31	3.29
Works in the evening and at night (% agree)	Urban	51.9%	51.8%	51.4%	51.0%	51.0%
	Rural	49.7%	50.3%	49.9%	50.6%	51.5%

- In the rural areas less employees contemplated to change jobs from 2008 to 2010, but in particular in 2009.
- In urban areas more employees took action to get another job in 2008 and 2009 and it seems to increase again in 2011.
- In urban areas there was more overtime among employees in 2007, 2008 and 2009, but in 2010 and 2011 there was more overtime in urban areas.
- The percentage of employees that work regularly or incidentally in the evening and at night was higher in urban areas but in rural areas this increased, until at 2011 there were more employees working at night or in the evening in rural areas.
- **Newly created jobs/pre-crisis jobs: hardly any new jobs were created.**
- **Employees / self-employed: see paragraph 2.2**

2.2 Briefly describe how the working conditions of specific workers groups are in a negative or positive way influenced by the crisis.

Table 2.4: Development of the number of employees (Source: Netherlands Working

Conditions Survey 2007-2011) and self-employed (Source: Dutch Central Bureau of Statistics)					
	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Number of independent contractors (x 1000)	635	678	687	705	728
Percentage of independent contractors	8.1%	8.6%	8.4%	8.7%	8.9%
Number of entrepreneurs (x 1000)	370	360	353	344	349
Percentage of entrepreneurs	4.7%	4.6%	4.3%	4.2%	4.3%
Number of employees (x 1000)	6861	6834	7167	7094	7133
Percentage of employees	87.2%	86.8%	87.3%	87.1%	86.9%

- The number of independent contractors (self-employed without personnel) increased constantly. The percentage also increased, but not in 2009 where it decreased slightly.
- The number and percentage of entrepreneurs (self-employed with personnel in the organisation) decreased during the recession.
- The number of employees dropped in the years 2008 and 2010.

Due to the economic recession, many fired employees started a new job as independent contractor, for instance in commercial services and consultation jobs. However many independent contractors in sectors like construction and financial services ran out of work at the same time, because of the recession. So there is a constant influx and outflow in the labour force of independent contractors, depending on the sector of industry. This group of independent contractors is growing continuously, triggering the Dutch government to interfere. Also due to the recession the number of companies decreased because of bankruptcy.

3. Impact of economic downturn

3.1 Summarize the main findings and conclusions of national studies, reports, articles about the impact of the economic crisis on working conditions, covering the areas of health and well-being, career and skills development, employment security and work-life balance.

There are not many publications with empirical results on the effect of the economic crisis on employees. The reason is that studies published in the scientific magazines always lag three of four years behind from the period of data collection. But there is also evidence that the economic crisis does not have big influence on employees keeping their work. This is found at the country level (Hooftman et al., 2012) as well as at the sectorial level (Klein Hesselink et al., 2011a) and also includes signals from employers (Klein Hesselink et al., 2011b). The effects of the crisis are mostly felt by the persons losing their job such as unemployed (Schuring et al., 2011) or flex workers with health problems, losing their temporary job and supported by a sickness absence social security benefit (Van der Burg et al., 2011). However these groups are not included in the databases of the working.

So all in all the effect of the economic crisis on the working population between age 15 and 65 are that (1) the number and percentage of flex workers have been steadily on the rise in

NL (Houtman & Van den Bossche, 2010), it slows down since 2007, but is still much higher than EU average (see: Eurostat, Labour Force Survey), (2) there is an increase in the disability inflow, particularly of mental health problems (UWV, 2012), (3) unemployment is rising, and (4) part of the fired employees become self-employed (table 2.4).

3.2 Comment and illustrate the role that in these studies is attached to the prospected long-term effects of the crisis on working conditions

Warnings are given to employers. One of the messages challenges the current comfortable working conditions that are no longer tenable in relation to the worldwide globalisation and competence of low income countries. The economic crisis works as a catalyst of change (De Ville, 2011). Another study warns employers to stop short-term dismissal policy and to concentrate on long-term investment on employees. This, because shortness of skilled and educated personnel is expected in the long run when the crisis is over. Employers will discover then that once crucial employees have left the organization, finding new adequate personnel will be difficult (Gründemann, 2009). These kinds of warnings are also the reason that employers embraced the chance to be supported by the government to keep employees by means of receiving unemployment benefits in order to educate and train employees in new skills (see the two specific regulations in 4.1). It appears that the percentage of employers that provide career and skills development for employees is a steady figure between 70% to 80%. It even did not change in 2009 (Josten et al., 2012).

The effect was that the employment figures only showed a slight decrease in the years 2008 and 2009. Another important factor was that part-time working temporary employees, who often have other income sources were fired or their contract hours were reduced (Josten, 2011). Besides that many fired employees started a new career as independent contractor. Job insecurity has an impact on employees' health and well-being (Klandermans et al., 2010), which in turn may affect the risk of employees ending up in precarious temporary employment or unemployment (Wagenaar et al., 2012).

4. Impact of policy reforms

4.1 Crisis policies as intervening factor

Please detail 1) recent crisis-related labour reforms, anti-crisis recovery interventions, stimulus initiatives or austerity measures adopted by the government and/or social partners that **have had an impact on working conditions** and 2) such an impact on working conditions. The information about the impact on working conditions should be drawn from published articles, studies, reports. Please remember mentioning the source. The following are the areas of interest:

Working time and the rise of unemployment was influenced by the government by means of two regulations: the particular regulation on working time reduction (bijzondere regeling voor werktijdverkorting, Wtv) from November 30, 2008 to March 21, 2009, and the part-time unemployment benefit regulation (deeltijd-WW regeling) from April 1, 2009 to July, 1 2011. Employers could use employment benefit funding to keep employees in case of reduced production and use the reduced working time for training and qualification of the employees (Josten, 2011; de Groot et al., 2012). But this policy is the only partly related to the economic crisis. There is a strong development in The Netherlands to extend the retirement age to 67 in

order to keep the old age pensions affordable. Both regulations are also used to train and qualify temporarily redundant employees new skills. This is deemed necessary by the government, because in the long run (forthcoming decades) shortness of highly qualified personnel is expected. All in all the policies may be effective, though direct measurement does not show effects and employees believe that their job also had been saved without the regulations (de Groot et al., 2012). Employers however are satisfied by the regulations (de Groot et al., 2012), and there is evidence that the average age of leaving the working life continues to be increasing (Hoofman et al., 2012). It can be even argued that this policy started too early, because of the recent rise of unemployment among young people (Bokdam et al., 2010).

4.2 Debate on crisis-related shifts in working conditions

What is the current debate between the social partners in your country on working conditions, seen in the light of the current economic crisis and what are prospects or desiderata for the near future. Briefly summarise the views of the key national actors (Employers and Trade Unions).

The debate on the websites of the social partners concentrates mainly on the socioeconomic effects of the current crisis, the rise of the retirement age and the affordability of a payable old age pension system. Keeping employment high and people at work are key subjects. The Dutch employers' organization AWFN states that there is no indication that the attention of employers for maintaining good working conditions is declining. But the trade unions argue to this that there is also no progression. However in a shared document of the trade unions and employers organizations, working circumstances of flex workers are mentioned to be improved. The trade union FNV postulates in its policy document 2012 that in appointments with employers organizations, working circumstances and health of employees will be guarded in particular. Work stress will also be watched closely and prevention should be part of social negotiation. A lot of stress related articles and suggestions for change are found on the websites of this union. The Dutch trade Union CNV indicates that the attention of employer on safety is declining.

Commentary by the NC

Please provide your own comments on:

1. how clear the current picture is on the impact of the current crisis on working conditions in your country.
2. the role and impact of recent policies by state and/or social partners on the current state of working conditions

The picture in this document shows that there is only some impact of the crisis on working conditions. Career prospects, mobility, wages, and working hours decreased somewhat, and job insecurity increased. Male, young, and low educated employees and employees in profit sectors mostly strongly feel the effects of the crisis. However many former employees disappeared into unemployment or the disability system or became independent contractor. Their situation and opinion is not represented in the description and experiences of working conditions by employees (on which the 'working conditions' info in this document is based on; the NWCS only consists of employees, no self-employed and no non-working members

of the population!). Besides this, the crisis was not the only problem in The Netherlands. The increase of the retirement age, insufficient pension funding and two time political elections also dominated the political agenda. All in all this makes that people are less inclined to complain about their work and are more satisfied with their current job.

John Klein Hesselink, TNO.

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