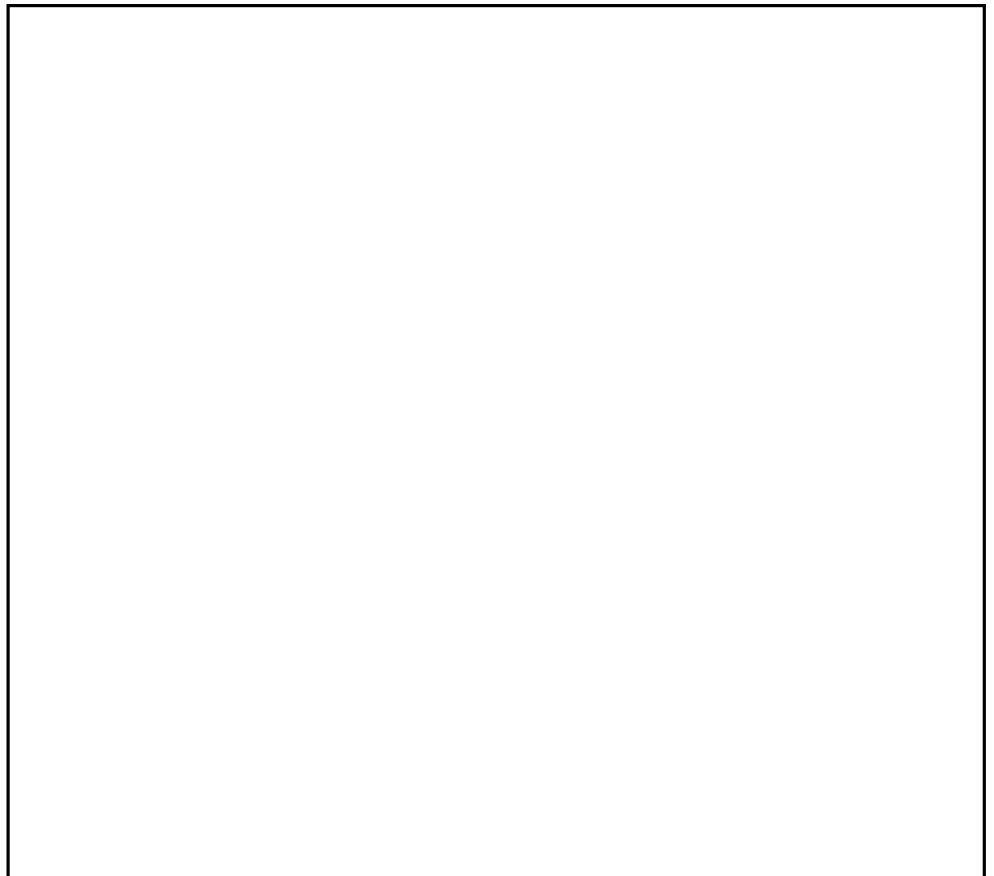




Sectoral profiles of working conditions



This report presents profiles of working conditions in individual sectors using data from the Third European Survey on Working Conditions, carried out by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in 2000 in 15 EU Member States. Eighteen sectors have been reviewed to assess the quality of work in each.

Key findings

- Agriculture and industry are the two sectors where exposure to physical risk is highest.
- Sectors in which workers have to work particularly unfavorable non-standard hours are agriculture, catering, transport and wholesale/retail.
- Working long hours is a feature in transport (45+ hours per week), in agriculture, in mining/quarrying and in construction.
- Short working weeks (less than 30 hours) are more common in education, in catering and in wholesale/retail.
- High job demands associated with high quality requirements do not necessarily entail workers having an influence over work organisation - as exemplified in catering, food and textiles. This may result in high work intensity with adverse consequences in terms of health and premature ageing.
- As regards psychological and mental health outcomes, the wholesale/retail and real estate sectors present the most favourable profiles while transport and the social sectors present the most unfavourable profiles.
- The two sectors with the least favourable profiles of working conditions are transport and catering. Finance and the public sector have more favourable profiles.
- In general the most negative changes since 1995 are found in an increase in job demands (catering, real estate, wholesale/retail), combined at times with deskilling and a decrease in job control (catering, wholesale/retail).

General characteristics

As can be seen in Table 1, there are some important structural differences between sectors, in terms of size, gender distribution, employment status and age.

Table 1

Sectors	% the working population	% female Workers	% self-employed	% working <30h./week	% working >44h./week	Average weekly hours
Agriculture	4.6	32.0	55	11	40	44.36
Food industry	2.4	38.7	6	15	23	38.70
Textiles	2.1	65.9	21	12	14	38.31
Chemicals	3.2	24.8	4	4	14	39.28
Metal	5.5	17.8	7	5	17	39.78
Electrical	2.0	34.2	8	9	10	37.60
Mining/quarrying and other manufacturing	5.7	22.0	13	6	19	39.81
Electricity, gas and water supply	0.8	16.6	7	1	17	40.33
Construction	7.6	7.9	20	3	28	42.10
Wholesale and retail trade	14.8	49.5	29	20	26	38.77
Hotels and restaurants	3.9	56.0	22	29	29	39.56
Transport	4.3	17.8	14	9	28	41.81
Post and telecommunications	1.7	36.0	3	12	15	37.25
Finance	3.4	48.1	13	14	18	38.11
Real estate	7.9	42.8	19	15	24	38.47
Public administration	7.5	40.6	1	13	9	36.81
Education	6.9	65.3	4	36	14	32.26
Health and social work /other community services /domestic services	15.1	73.0	13	26	12	34.20
All sectors	100	45.1	17	16	20	38.19

Sector characteristics: size

Two sectors are quite large: health and social sector and wholesale/retail. Both are also heterogeneous. For instance, the health and social sector covers a wide range of health care institutions as well as all kinds of social work institutions.

Sector characteristics: gender

Three sectors have a high proportion of female workers: the health and social sector (73%), education (65%) and textile manufacturing (66%). Most sectors of industry are male-dominated, in particular construction with only 8% of female workers but also public utilities (17%), transport (18%) and all of manufacturing, in particular metal manufacturing (18%).

Sector characteristics: age

With respect to age, agriculture is a relatively 'old' sector: 48% of the workers are aged between 45 and 64 years old and 5% are over 65 years old. Catering, hotels and restaurants at the other end of the spectrum is a 'young' sector with over 28% of workers aged less than 25 years.

Sector characteristics: employment status

On average, 83% of workers are employees. The percentage of employees is highest in the industrial sectors, post and telecommunications, public utilities, public administration and education.

Sectors with the highest proportion of self-employed are agriculture (55%), wholesale and retail (29%), hotel and restaurants (22%), textile manufacturing (21%) and construction (20%).

Some sectors have a higher proportion of employees on fixed term contracts: agriculture (15%), hotels and restaurants (13%), real estate (12%). Temporary agency work is more prevalent in construction (4%) and hotels and restaurants (4%). Apprenticeship is more prevalent in construction (4%).

The sectors with the highest proportion of employees on open-ended contracts are public utilities (89%), finance (88%) and transport (86%).

The sectors with the highest proportion of employees who report they do not fit in any of the above mentioned categories and responded 'other' are agriculture (11%), hotels and restaurants (8%) and services such as health (5%).

Temporary agency work is forbidden by law in the public administration sector in France, Belgium and Spain and in the construction sector in Germany.

Exposure to physical risks

Exposure to physical risk is highest in the industry and agriculture sectors.

Sectoral profiles of working conditions

Working conditions	Unfavourable sector	Favourable sector
Physical work conditions: noise, air quality, danger/vibrations, high or low temperatures, and radiation	Agriculture Industry (food, textiles, chemicals, metal, electrical, and miscellaneous) Public utilities Building and construction Transport	Wholesale/retail Catering, hotels and restaurants Post and telecommunications Finance Real estate Public sector Education Social sector
Ergonomics: painful posture, heavy load and repetitive movements	Agriculture Industry (food, textiles, metal, miscellaneous) Building and construction Catering, hotels and restaurants Transport	Wholesale/ retail Finance Real estate Public sector Education

Time

Sectors in which employees have to work particularly unfavourable non-standard hours are agriculture, catering, transport and wholesale/retail.

Working 'long hours' on the other hand, is common in almost all sectors with the exception of the post and telecommunications, education and the public and social sectors.

Working conditions	Unfavourable sector	Favourable sector
Non-standard hours	Agriculture Catering, hotels and restaurants Transport Wholesale/retail	Industry (textiles, chemicals, metal, electrical, miscellaneous) Public utilities Building and construction Post and telecommunications Finance Real estate Public sector Education
Long working hours	Agriculture Industry (textiles, chemicals, metal, miscellaneous) Public utilities Building and construction Wholesale/retail Catering, hotels and restaurants Transport Real estate	Post/telecommunications Public sector Education Social sector

Average weekly working times of less than 29 hours are common in five sectors. These are education, the wholesale/retail trade, catering, health and social services and the other community, social and personal activities sectors. By contrast, short working weeks are far less common in mining, manufacturing (textiles, wood/paper, chemicals, metal, electrical, transport/other), public utilities, construction, transport, post and telecommunications, financial intermediation and the public sector.

The proportion of employees working very long hours (over 45 hours) is higher in the agriculture, mining, food manufacturing, construction, printing, wholesale/retail, catering, transport and domestic services sectors.

Service industries such as the wholesale/retail and the catering sectors are characterised by a combination of both short and long hours.

Work organisation

High job demands associated with high quality requirements do not necessarily entail workers having an influence over the organisation of the work. This is the case notably in catering, food and textiles. This may result in a high level of work intensity with negative health outcomes.

Sectors such as the wood /paper and the overland transport sectors are for example characterised by a high level of work intensity combined with long working hours while the education sector and the domestic services sector combine a lower level of work intensity with shorter working hours.

Some sectors differ from this pattern:

- Low intensity and long working hours: mining and public utilities.
- High intensity and 'average' working hours: manufacturing, transport equipment, and electrical manufacturing.

Sectoral profiles of working conditions

Working conditions	Unfavourable sector	Favourable sector
Job demands: work at high speed, not enough time to do the work	Industry (food, metal, miscellaneous) Building and construction Catering, hotels and restaurants Transport Post and telecommunications	Agriculture Wholesale/retail Public sector Education Social sector
Job control: free to choose order of tasks, methods and the pace of work	Industry (food, textiles, chemicals and miscellaneous) Catering, hotels and restaurants Transport Post and telecommunications Education	Agriculture Industry (electrical) Finance Real estate Public sector Social sector
Skilled work: meet quantitative or qualitative standards, judge quality, and monotonous or complicated tasks, learning opportunities, solving problems	Agriculture Industry (food, textiles) Wholesale/retail Catering, hotels and restaurants Transport	Industry (chemicals, metal and miscellaneous) Post and telecommunications Building and construction Finance Real estate
Task flexibility: team work and job rotation	Agriculture Industry (textiles) Wholesale/retail Real estate Transport Education	Industry (food, chemicals, metal, electricity, miscellaneous) Post and telecommunications Building and construction Catering, hotels and restaurants Public sector Social sector
Social support: assistance from colleagues and management	Agriculture Industry (food) Building and construction Wholesale/retail Catering, hotels and restaurants	Industry (chemicals, metal, electrical, miscellaneous) Public utilities Post and telecommunications Finance Public sector Education Social sector

Health outcomes and risks

Two sectors have a highly unfavourable profile with regard to health outcomes: the transport and the social sectors. Both combine exposure to physical risks with exposure to work-related stress problems as well as to discrimination and intimidation.

The wholesale/retail sector appears to be the sector with the most favourable profile in this regard.

Health outcomes	Unfavourable sector	Favourable sector
Work-related musculo-skeletal problems	Agriculture Building and construction Transport Textile industry Social sector	Financial intermediation, Education Real estate Wholesale/retail Public sector Chemical industry
Work-related stress problems	Transport Education Catering, hotels and restaurants Public sector Social sector	Wholesale/retail Industry (food) Real estate Building and construction
Discrimination	Catering, hotels and restaurants Transport Public sector Social sector	Agriculture Industry (food, textiles, chemical, metal and miscellaneous) Building & construction Wholesale/retail Finance Real estate

Overall sector rankings by working conditions

Some sectors have significantly more favourable or unfavourable scores according to 10 different working conditions criteria.

Transport and catering are the sectors with the most frequent unfavourable working conditions:

- Transport has no positive risk factor and has nine negative risk factors. It is number one in terms of physical and psychosocial risks. It has a neutral position on only one factor: social support
- Catering has eight negative risks factors and two positive risk factors (physical work conditions, task flexibility).

At the other end of the spectrum, the finance sector, the public sector and, to a lesser extent, the education and social services sectors have more positive profiles:

- The financial sector and the public sector do not have any unfavourable negative risk factors in terms of physical and psychosocial risks while the education and the social sector are very low on this measure
- The public sector and the social sector, however, have a greater risk in terms of discrimination and intimidation.

Sectoral profiles of working conditions

Sector	Significant no. of negative risks	Significant no. of positive risks	Net balance in risks	Characteristics of the sector
Agriculture	7	3	-4	High on physical risks + highly unfavorable on working hours
Food industry	5	2	-3	High physical + psychosocial risk
Textile industry	7	2	-3	High physical + psychosocial risk
Chemicals industry	3	7	+4	High on psychosocial risk + highly unfavorable on physical work conditions
Metal industry	4	5	+1	High physical + psychosocial risk
Electrical industry	1	6	+5	Low physical + psychosocial risk
Industry: miscellaneous	5	5	0	High physical + psychosocial risk
Public utilities	2	6	+4	Low physical + psychosocial risk + highly unfavorable on physical work conditions
Building and construction	7	2	-5	High physical + psychosocial risk
Wholesale/retail	5	5	0	Positive and negative positions on risks are in balance
Catering, hotels and restaurants	8	2	-6	No 2 on physical + psychosocial risk; no standard hours
Transport	9	0	-9	No 1 on physical + psychosocial risk
Post and telecommunications	2	4	+2	High on psychosocial risk
Finance	0	7	+7	No 1/2 on lack of physical + psychosocial risk
Real estate	3	6	+3	Low on physical risk
Public sector	1	8	+7	No 1/2 on lack of physical + psychosocial risk
Education	2	7	+5	Low on physical and psychosocial risk
Social sector	1	6	+5	Low on physical and psychosocial risk

Profiles of selected sectors

Four detailed sector profiles are presented: transport, catering, finance and the social sector. Two of the sectors have been selected due to their generally favourable working conditions and health outcomes and the other two for being amongst the sectors with the least favourable working conditions and health outcomes.

Figure 1: Sectoral profile of the transport sector

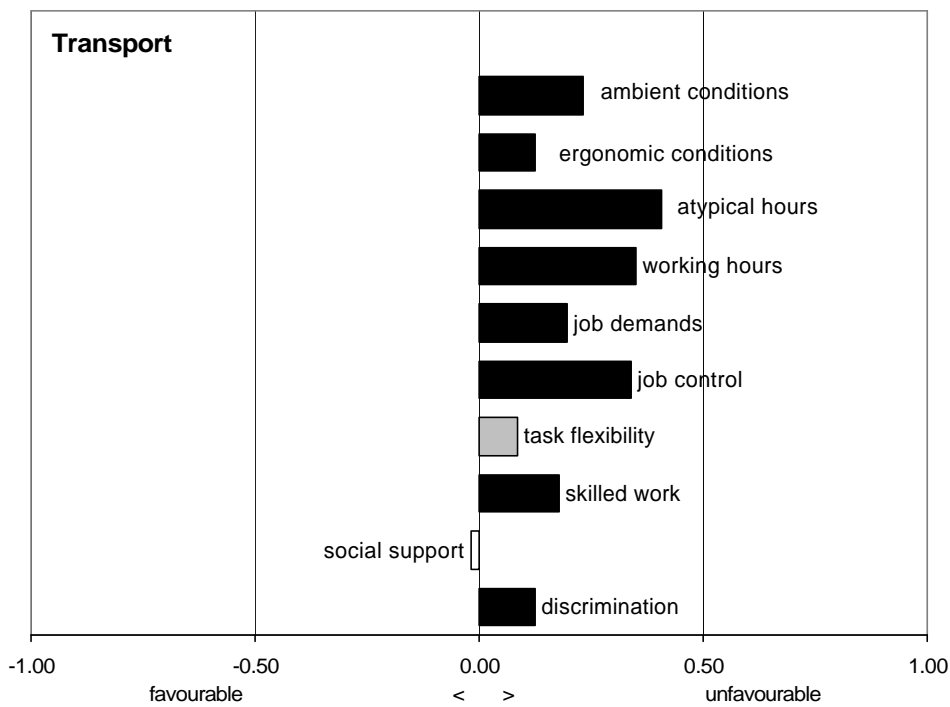


Figure 2: Sectoral profile of the catering sector

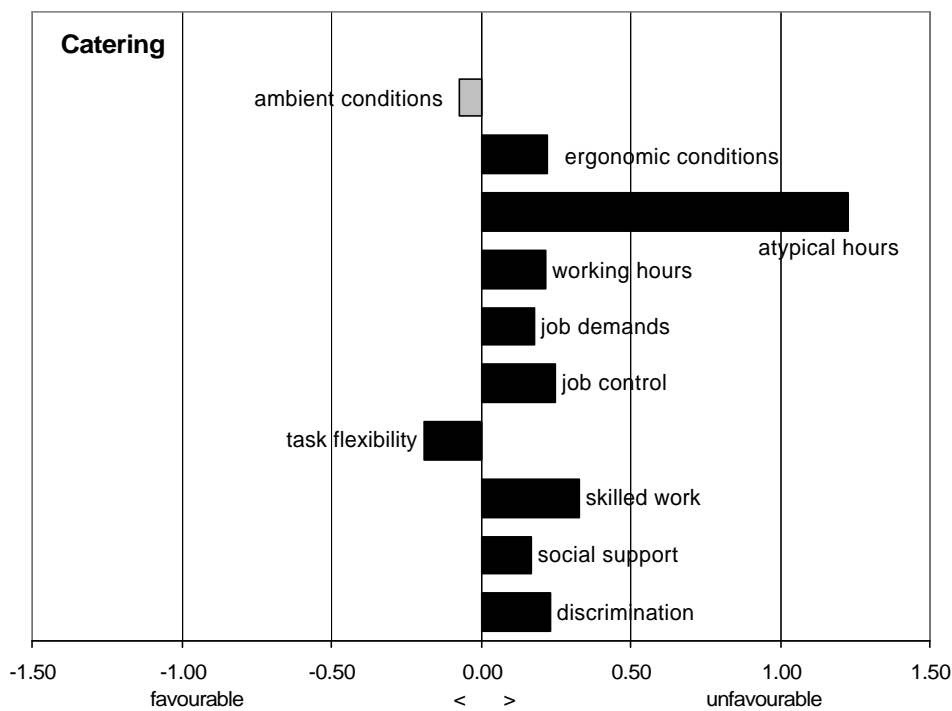


Figure 3: Sectoral profile of the finance sector

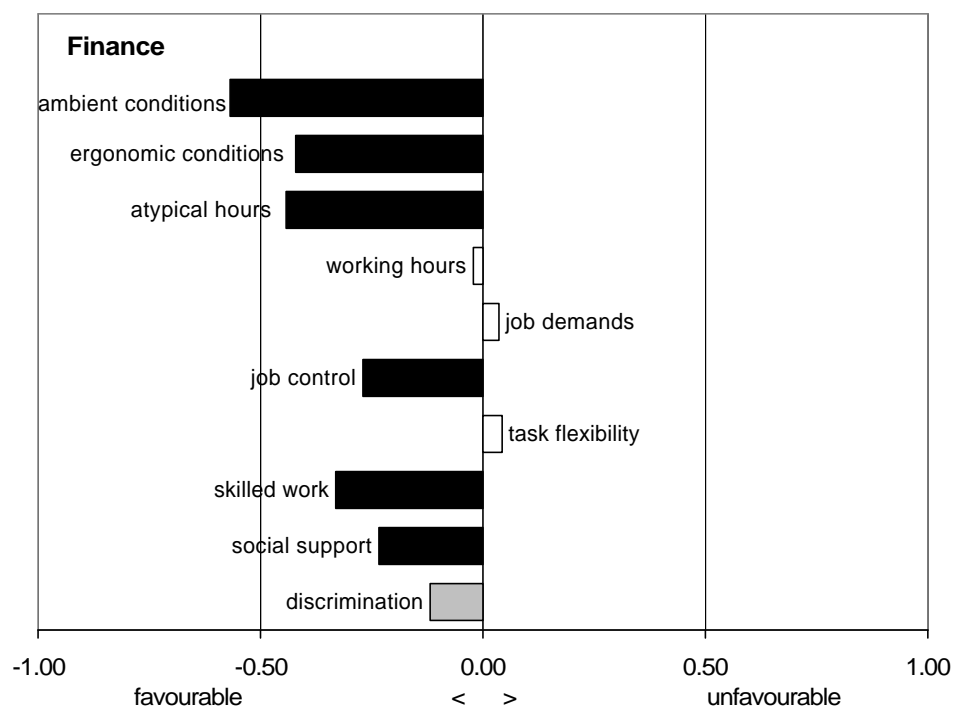
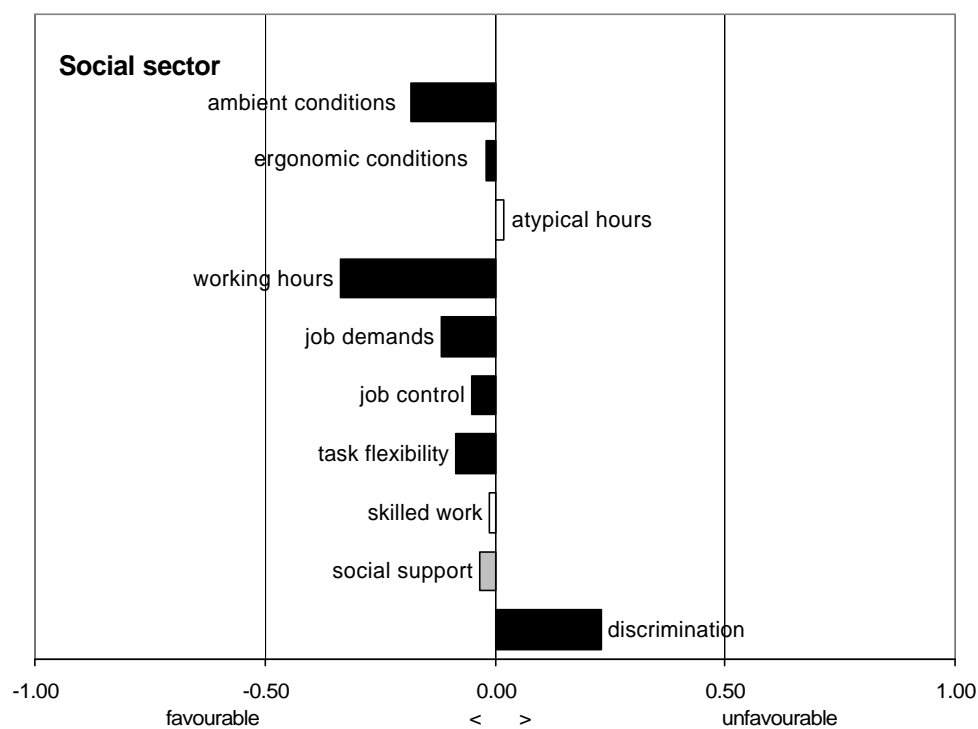


Figure 4: Sectoral profile of the social sector



Changes in working conditions from 1995-2000 by sector

In general, the most negative changes are associated with lack of job control, unskilled work, as well as discrimination within many sectors.

A significant increase in unfavourable ergonomics took place in manufacturing and construction, whereas a significant increase in high job demands took place in the catering, real estate and to a lesser extent in wholesale/retail sectors.

It should be noted that the increase in job demands in catering and wholesale/retail sectors has been accompanied by an increase in lack of control and unskilled work. This strongly increases the risk of job strain and other negative consequences arising from work stress.

It should also be noted that in almost all sectors the amount of time spent working with computers has increased while the amount of time spent in direct customer contact has decreased.

This leaflet was written by Irene Houtman and Agnès Parent-Thirion and is based on the report written by Irene Houtman, Frank Andries, Ruurt van den Berg and Steven Dhondt (TNO Work & Employment).

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