

# Working time patterns for work life balance and sustainable work

Contributing elements from Eurofound's research

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# Outline

- Eurofound
- Background and context
- Working time and WLB in a life course perspective
- Working time patterns and work-life balance
- Policy implications



# Eurofound – basic facts



European Foundation  
for the Improvement of  
Living and Working  
Conditions



Established in 1975- based in Dublin



Budget of approx. €20 million



Approx. 100 staff members



Tripartite agency




# Background and context I

- ✓ Treaty of Rome **1957** – Equal pay for equal work
- ✓ Since, **significant progress has been made**: increased number of women in the LM and their progress in achieving better education and training.
- ✓ However, **gender gaps remain**:
  - Women overrepresented in lower paid sectors jobs
  - Women underrepresented in decision-making positions.
  - [very] Low take up rates of paternity and parental leave by fathers.
  - Uneven/unequal distribution of work (paid and unpaid) between men and women.

# Background and context II

- ✓ 2015 European Commission roadmap [New start to address the challenges of work–life balance faced by working families](#) + consultations
- ✓ 2015 EC [Strategic engagement for gender equality 2016-2019](#)
  1. *Increasing female labour market participation and equal economic independence;*
  2. *Reducing the gender pay, earnings and pension gaps and thus fighting poverty among women;*
  3. *Promoting equality between women and men in decision-making;*
  4. ...
- ✓ 2016 European Parliament report [Creating labour market conditions favourable for work–life balance](#)
- ✓ 2017 EC WLB package incl. Directive prop. on [work-life balance for parents and carers](#)

# 2017 Work-life Balance Package

	CURRENT EU LAW	IMPACT OF THE PROPOSAL
<b>Paternity Leave</b> 	No minimum standards for paternity leave at EU-level.	<p>All working fathers will be able to take at least 10 working days of paternity leave around the time of birth of the child.</p> <p>Paternity leave will be compensated at least at the level of sick pay.</p>
<b>Parental Leave</b> 	<p>At least 4 months per parent, out of which one month is non-transferable between parents.</p> <p>Parents can take leave until their child is 8 years old.</p> <p>No minimum rules on allowance/ payment.</p>	<p>At least 4 months per parent that cannot be transferred between parents.</p> <p>Parents can take leave in flexible forms (full-time, part-time, in a piecemeal way).</p> <p>Parents can take leave until their child is 12 years old.</p> <p>Parental leave will be compensated at least at the level of sick pay.</p>
<b>Flexible Working Arrangements</b> 	<p>Right to request reduced and flexible working hours upon return from parental leave</p> <p>Right to request part-time work for all workers</p>	<p>All working parents of children up to 12 and carers with dependent relatives will have the right to request the following flexible working arrangements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reduced working hours</li> <li>2. Flexible working hours</li> <li>3. Flexibility on the place of work</li> </ol>

# European pillar of social rights

## ✓ 09 Work-life balance

*“Parents and people with caring responsibilities have the right to suitable leave, flexible working arrangements and access to care services. Women and men shall have equal access to special leaves of absence in order to fulfil their caring responsibilities and be encouraged to use them in a balanced way.”*

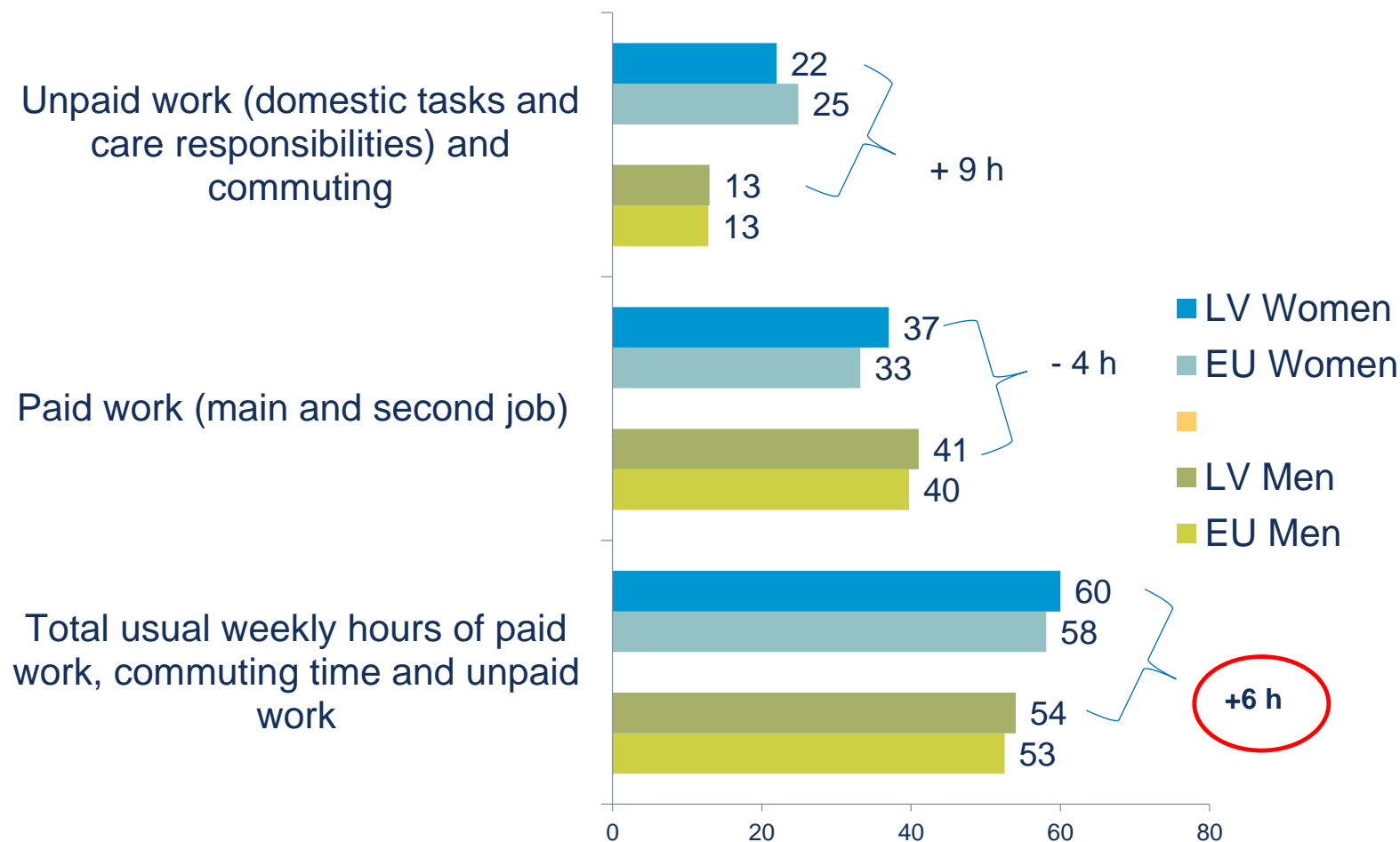
## ✓ 11 Childcare and support to children

*“a. Children have the right to affordable early childhood education and care of good quality.”*

*European Pillar of Social Rights, 17 November 2017*

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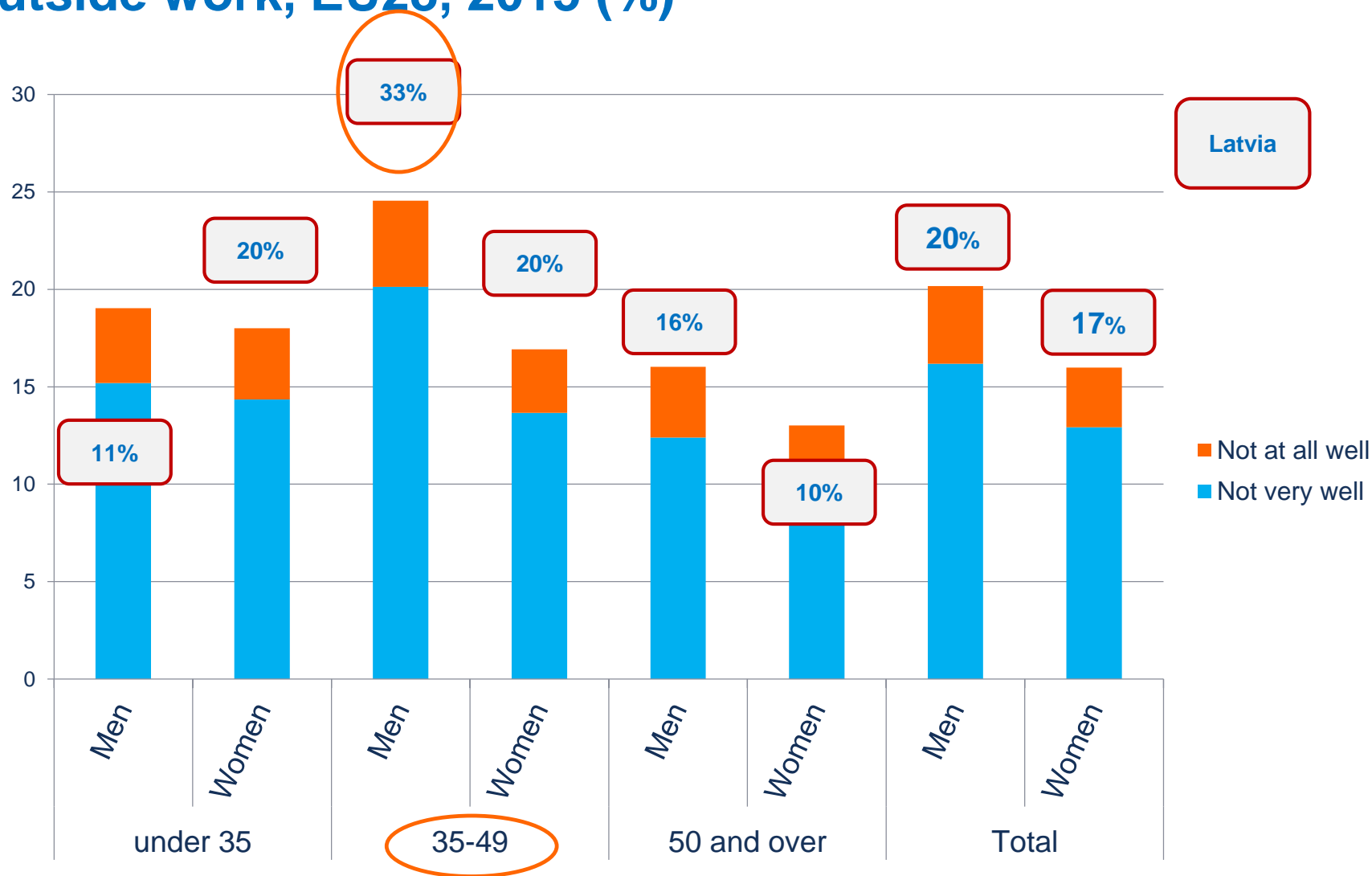
# Paid and unpaid work per week, by sex, EU28, 2015



Source: EWCS 2015

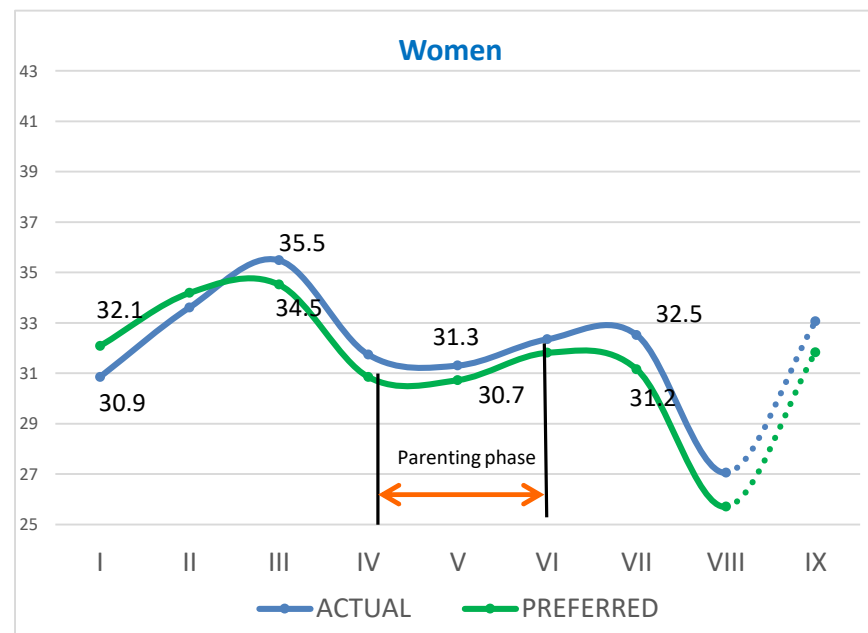
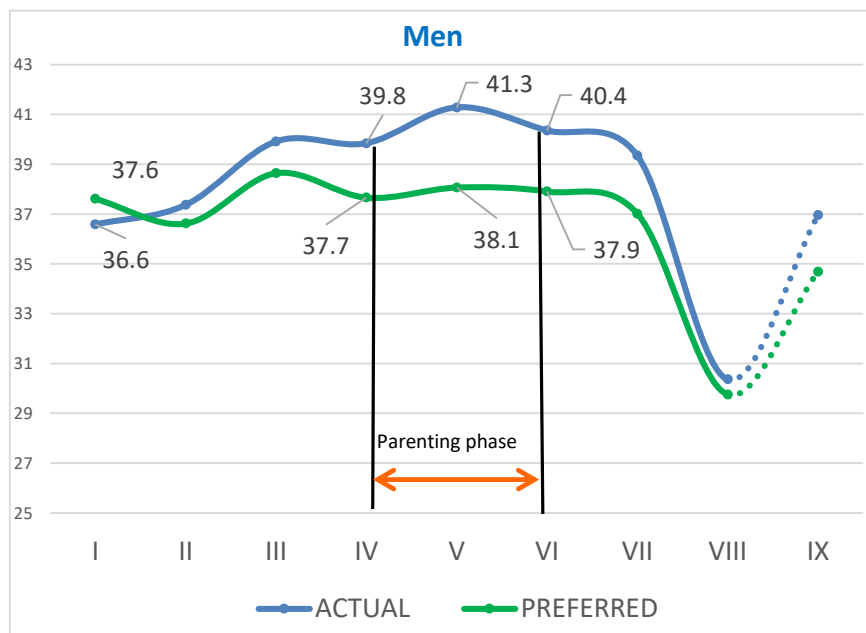


# Poor fit of working hours with family/social commitments outside work, EU28, 2015 (%)



Source: EWCS, 2015

# Actual and Preferred Weekly Working Time across the Life Course, by Sex, Hours per Week, employees, EU28, 2015



**I** Single persons (18-35 years), living with their parents or relatives; **II** Single persons (under 46 years), without children; **III** Younger cohabiting couples without children; **IV** Cohabiting couples with youngest children under 7 years; **V** Cohabiting couples with young children between 7-12 years; **VI** Cohabiting couples with teenage children between 13-18 years; **VII** Midlife 'empty nest' couples without resident children; **VIII** Older cohabiting couples without resident children; **IX** Single persons (aged 50 years or older), without resident children;

# Working time patterns and work-life balance I

- The **vast majority of workers** in the EU stated that their **working hours fit well or very well** with their private life obligations;
- However... men appear to be less satisfied with their work–life balance than women:
  - H1 - **men have longer working hours** and relatively more difficulties adapting working time to family life or other social commitments whereas women adapted their working time to their (family) needs
  - H2 - **gender labour market segregation** and **gender division of unpaid work**: many women, anticipating their role as the main care providers in the domestic sphere, may chose occupations, sectors and branches of activity that are known to make it easier to combine work with family commitments.

# Working time patterns and work-life balance II

- Life course impact: negative impact during the **early parenting phase**.
- **Long working hours** are **negatively** associated with WLB.
- Working time arrangements that favour **fixed and regular working hours** are positively associated with WLB.
- High **predictability of working time** and/or **job autonomy** also increase the likelihood of workers' reporting a more balanced work-life situation.

# Policy implications

- Room for improvement: mixed policies/legislation across the EU and evidence that working parents want change.
- Working time arrangements avoiding long hours and favouring fixed, regular and predictable working hours are more likely to have a positive impact on WLB.
- Workplace is crucial level.
- Early parenting phase of life is crucial in terms of WLB.
- Emphasis on encouraging men.
- ‘Transformative’ policies – better distribution of work.

# NEWS

- ***Recent Reports:***
  - “Developments in working life in Europe: EurWORK annual review 2016”
  - “Working time patterns for sustainable work” (EWCS)
- ***NEW Projects:***
  - 2018 - Work-life balance and reconciliation challenges for men and women in the European Union
  - 2018 - Gender equality at the workplace: new evidence from the EWCS

**Thank you  
for  
your attention!**

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