



Sustainable work and the ageing workforce

A report based on the fifth
European Working Conditions Survey

5th
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Working
Conditions
Survey**

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Abbreviations used in the report

ESS	European Social Survey
ESDS	Economic and Social Data Service
EU-OSHA	European Agency for Safety and Health and Work
EVS	European Values Study
EWCS	European Working Conditions Survey
ICT	information and communications technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISCO	International Standard Classification of Occupations
ISSP	International Social Survey Programme
LFS	Labour Force Survey (Eurostat)
NACE	Nomenclature générale des activités économiques dans les Communautés Européennes (General industrial classification of economic activities within the European Communities)
NUTS	Nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques (Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PSU	primary sampling unit
UKDA	UK Data Archive
WHO	World Health Organization

Country codes

EU27

The order of countries follows the EU protocol based on the alphabetical order of the geographical names of countries in the original language.

BE	Belgium
BG	Bulgaria
CZ	Czech Republic
DK	Denmark
DE	Germany
EE	Estonia
IE	Ireland
EL	Greece
ES	Spain
FR	France
IT	Italy
CY	Cyprus
LV	Latvia
LT	Lithuania
LU	Luxembourg
HU	Hungary
MT	Malta
NL	Netherlands
AT	Austria
PL	Poland
PT	Portugal
RO	Romania
SI	Slovenia
SK	Slovakia
FI	Finland
SE	Sweden
UK	United Kingdom

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Executive summary

Introduction

What are the conditions that make work sustainable over a lifetime and are therefore likely to promote a longer working life? The concept of work sustainability takes into account the simultaneous – and partly contradictory – evolution of working conditions and of the demography of the active population. It builds not only on research on job quality for older workers, but also on research examining how job quality affects all age groups. This study, which is based on an analysis of the fifth European Working Conditions Survey, considers five dimensions of work that have proved essential to the understanding of work sustainability:

- working conditions;
- physical and psychological health;
- the expressive dimension of work;
- reconciliation of working and non-working time;
- socioeconomic conditions.

Policy context

Active ageing in employment has been a long-standing issue in European policy, notably within the European employment strategies, and is a central issue within the recent Europe 2020 strategy. It has been one of the three pillars of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012. The need to increase the employment rate of older workers has been translated into quantitative objectives intended to keep those aged 55–64 in work and to raise their average age of exit from the labour market. There is, however, a growing consensus that these objectives cannot be achieved without a significant improvement in working conditions.

Key findings

Exposure to selected characteristics of work

Working conditions: Night work and shift work decrease with age, as does the proportion of workers working at very high speed. There is little difference among age groups in terms of exposure to physical strain at work (including painful positions and a stressful work environment).

Reconciliation of working and non-working time: Difficulties achieving work–life balance decrease with age, particularly at 50 and beyond. For women, there is a sharp decrease in irregular work schedules and difficulty in taking time off to deal with personal matters; for men, there is a sharper decrease in poor balance between work and family or social commitments.

Expressive dimension of work: Workers over the age of 50 report fewer opportunities for learning and access to training and less support from colleagues and managers. Men particularly report a decline in career prospects. However, older workers also report more job latitude and being able to apply their own ideas.

Socioeconomic conditions: Around 40% of women and 10% of men aged 55–59 work part-time, a slightly higher number than among those aged 50–54. Among those over 50, 10% of men and 15% of women have fixed-term contracts, and a quarter have less than five years' seniority in their current organisation. Feelings of job insecurity increase among women during their 40s and among men between 45–49 years and 50–54 years.

Eight key indicators for job sustainability are suggested by statistical analysis: shift or night work; tiring or painful positions; working to tight deadlines; poor fit between work and other commitments; weak latitude at

work; weak social support at work; bad career prospects; and job insecurity.

Health, well-being and satisfaction

- ✎ Indicators of health problems, such as backache or sleeping difficulties, increase in the two decades between ages 40 and 60, but decrease for those still at work after 60 (although this is probably because those in poor health have left the labour market).
- ✎ Dissatisfaction with working conditions peaks in the 45–54 age group and is higher in low-skilled occupations and mid-skilled manual occupations.
- ✎ Certain work characteristics are statistically linked to the trend in workers' deteriorating general health between the ages of 40 and 60: poor fit between working hours and other commitments, painful positions, poor career prospects, and weak social support (particularly for men).
- ✎ In the 50–59 age group, self-evaluated health is particularly poor among mid-skilled manual workers and low-skilled workers. The main factors linked to physical and psychological ill health are painful positions, poor fit of working time with private life, tight deadlines and poor career prospects.

Attitudes to working after age 50

- ✎ The number of men and women who say work puts their health at risk is highest in the 50–54 age group. These numbers are particularly high among managers and professionals in the 50–54 and 55–59 age groups, and among women in these occupations.
- ✎ Painful positions, shift or night work and poor work–life balance are the main factors explaining why workers aged 50–59 feel that work puts their health at risk and negatively affects health.
- ✎ One-third of employees aged 50–54 feel they will not be able to work until they are 60 or wouldn't want to do the same job until then. This perception is more common among women in mid-skilled manual occupations (55%) and in low-skilled occupations (54%), contrasting with male managers and professionals (17%) and intermediate professionals in general (25%).

- ✎ Painful positions, poor work–life balance, perceived job insecurity and poor prospects for career advancement are the main reasons given for not being able to do the same job until the age of 60.

- ✎ About 29% of employees aged 50–59 would prefer to work fewer hours than they currently do, and the percentage is higher among high-skilled than low-skilled occupations.

- ✎ Poor work–life balance, weak social support at work and painful positions are the main reasons given for the wish to reduce working hours.

Comparisons between countries

Country comparisons indicate that certain EU Member States share a set of working conditions that workers perceive as unsustainable. In these countries, employment rates decrease significantly from age 45 to 49, workers over 50 more often report dissatisfaction with working conditions, and working conditions are found to be more difficult than elsewhere.

Policy pointers

Some protective mechanisms that once prevented older workers from exposure to painful working conditions are apparently being eroded by demographic evolution and changes in work organisation. This raises the challenge of addressing work organisation issues in the context of an ageing workforce.

Painful positions, poor work–life balance and bad career prospects are recurrent factors explaining work unsustainability for ageing workers. The first raises challenges in the areas of health and safety regulation, ergonomics and task distribution, while the other two are matters for human resource management, company organisation and flexibility.

Work sustainability differs between occupational groups. The study highlights factors influencing unsustainability, not only for low-skilled occupations and mid-skilled manual occupations, but also for high-skilled occupations. Particularly affected are women managers and professionals. The wide range of affected occupations suggests a differentiated policy approach is needed.

Motivation to remain at work depends not only on the variables considered in this study, but also on various characteristics of national socio-political and institutional models such as income distribution, and pension and tax regime.

Conceptual framework *and* methodology

Conceptual framework and methodology

Policy background

Active ageing in employment is one of the three pillars of the European Year for Active Ageing and Solidarity between Generations 2012. An official EU press release on 18 January 2012 stated:

Encouraging older workers to stay in employment notably requires the improvement of working conditions and their adaptation to the health status and needs of older workers, updating their skills by providing better access to lifelong learning, and the review of tax and benefit systems to ensure that there are effective incentives for working longer.

Ageing at work has been on the agenda of European policies for a long time, notably within the European employment strategy. An increase in the employment rate of ageing workers has been translated into quantitative objectives, such as the Stockholm targets, intended to raise the employment rate among workers aged 55 to 64 to 50% by 2010, and the Barcelona targets, intended to raise the average age at which workers leave the labour market by five years by 2010.

The Europe 2020 employment targets aim for an average employment rate of 75% in the 20–64 age group, and this cannot be reached without increasing the employment rate among older people. Although there is general consensus that the objective of persuading people to work longer

cannot be achieved without improving working conditions for older workers, the evaluation reports of the Stockholm and Barcelona targets pay little attention to concrete policy measures that might improve the quality of work and the attractiveness of work for this group (European Commission, 2007). Recent reports on active ageing policies in Europe put more emphasis on restructuring pension schemes, rebalancing financial (dis)incentives, lowering the labour costs of older workers, or introducing retraining grants for older workers (European Commission, 2011b). Regarding the quality and sustainability of work, the topics raised by these reports seem less central to the European Year 2012 programme.

Ageing at work has also been on Eurofound's agenda for several years. Besides analyses based on European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) data, Eurofound has highlighted good practice in employment initiatives for older workers (2006a, 2006b and 2006c), has produced company case studies in the area of age management¹ and of disability management,² and has examined company initiatives to support workers with care responsibilities for adults (2011). Other European agencies have also investigated the relationships between work and age in their respective domains. Cedefop notably published studies of skills mismatches, skills obsolescence and training needs for older workers (Cedefop, 2010). The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA, 2009) has given priority to ageing and occupational health, investigating the link between the employability of older workers and the impact of work on their

¹ <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/research/0296.htm>

² <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/socialcohesion/egs/search.php>

health. According to EU-OSHA, ill health is a significant predictor of withdrawal from paid employment among workers over the age of 50.

Analytical framework

The conceptualisation of the sustainability of work in the context of ageing is at the intersection of two research fields. One covers research on the quality of work and employment (job quality) as it affects all age groups, and the other field deals with research on older workers specifically and considers a wider range of topics than just work sustainability.

Research on job quality

In the literature on the assessment and measurement of job quality, most authors consider quality to be a multi-dimensional concept, and various multidimensional models have been proposed. Eurofound (2002) suggested a four-dimensional model on quality of work and employment, with the following dimensions: having a job with fundamental rights and employment security; protecting health and well-being; balancing work with non-work life; and using and acquiring skills. Green (2006) and Brown et al (2007) give a priority to work content, working conditions and employment conditions (in the broad sense, including wages).

The Laeken indicators of job quality, which were established by the EU in 2001 and agreed by Member States, aim to measure the political process of employment strategy and combine 10 dimensions. They cover labour market (inclusion and access to the labour market, economic performance, lifelong learning), working conditions (intrinsic job quality, health and safety, flexibility and security, work organisation, and work-life balance) and social policies (gender equality, social dialogue, diversity and non-discrimination) (Davoine et al, 2008).

In addition to working conditions, the International Labour Organization (ILO) concept of 'decent work', in accordance with its worldwide scope, pays more attention to labour rights, social protection and social justice (Ghai, 2003). According to Munoz de Bustillo et al (2009), both quality of work and quality of employment should be reflected in any job quality index. As key components of a job quality index, these authors select income, working time, flexibility and job security, participation, skills development, autonomy, physical and psychological risks, work intensity and meaningfulness of work.

In a more recent review of the literature on job quality for the FP7 research project WALQING, Holman and McClelland (2011) suggest covering three areas – work quality,

employment quality and empowerment quality – using a five-dimensional model combining work organisation (job demands and job resources), wages and benefits, security and flexibility, skills and personal development, and engagement and representation. On the basis of the fifth EWCS data, Green and Mostafa (Eurofound, 2012b) suggest four job quality indices:

1. earnings;
2. prospects;
3. intrinsic job quality, which includes skills and autonomy, a safe physical environment, an acceptable level of work intensity and a secure social environment;
4. working time quality.

The core objective of this report on the sustainability of work is not to discuss all these dimensions, but it is important to stress that the quality of work is necessarily multidimensional and integrates research results, policymaking and ethical perspectives (fundamental rights). These multiple dimensions must be kept in mind when examining the situation of workers at different ages.

Research on older workers

Several approaches have been taken in the research on older workers.

- The analysis of the differentiated effects of particular working conditions according to age – whether factors such as painful positions, night- or shift-work schedules, time pressure and frequent changes in work are more threatening to older workers. The 'ergonomics of ageing' is an emerging concern in age management (Volkoff and Pueyo, 2008).
- Understanding the relationships between age and health, particularly the long-term risks associated with past working conditions (Volkoff et al, 1998; Molinié et al, 2012) and the reciprocal relationship between health status (such as having a chronic disease, functional disability or declining capacity) and work performance (Gaudart, 2000).
- The evaluation of the well-being at work of older workers, including the evolution of job satisfaction, work-life balance, specific time preferences of ageing workers and care responsibilities for elderly or disabled relatives (Guillemard, 2003).

- ✎ Examining the links between ageing and skills, including the recognition of experience, risks of skills obsolescence, changing attitudes towards organisational change and new technologies, and access to training (Delay and Huyez-Levrat, 2006).
- ✎ Examining intergenerational relationships at work, including the evolution of generational diversity at work, areas of solidarity or tension between generations and work as a changing value according to age (Vendramin, 2010; Méda and Vendramin, 2010; Delay et al, 2010; Gautié and Guillemard, 2004).
- ✎ Identifying the qualitative factors that explain early retirement or other anticipated exit schemes, such as the role of negative or positive stereotypes in early exits (Gaillard and Desmette, 2010; CAPA, 2006), the influence of stress, perceptions of declining health, the role of family structures and family events, and differentiated representations of retirement according to gender and socio-professional status.
- ✎ Measuring economic trade-offs between wages and early retirement benefits or incentives, and modelling macroeconomic (early) retirement patterns (European Commission, 2011a).

Most research on older workers addresses only the ‘labour market survivors’, neglecting those who have become unemployed or have been dismissed at an earlier stage of their career, perhaps through company restructuring or plant closure.

Developing an analytical framework

The challenge of the analytical framework used here is to select those features of job quality that are most relevant to the ageing issue, together with those features of ageing that are most relevant to job quality.

The issue of work sustainability has been present in social science research at international level for about 10 years, in order to take into account the simultaneous – and partly contradictory – evolution of working conditions, on the one hand, and of the changing demography of the active population (‘structural ageing’), on the other. Thinking in this field was activated by a handbook on sustainable work systems initiated by Swedish researchers, with contributions from various countries in 2002 (Docherty et al, 2002). The authors contrast ‘sustainable’ work systems with ‘intensive’ ones. They analyse the extent of the latter and their negative effects, in the long run, for workers’ well-being and also for the quality of goods and services produced. They call for alternative approaches, based on the idea of a ‘regeneration of human and social resources’.

Other studies carried out more recently, by these authors and many others, make it possible to analyse the conditions of sustainability and provide diverse definitions of this concept. This report adopts a rather large characterisation, which considers as sustainable a system where the following criteria are satisfied: ‘biocompatibility’, which means that work is adapted to the functional properties of the human organism and to their evolution with age; ‘ergo-compatibility’, where efficient work strategies are developed; and ‘socio-compatibility’, allowing self-fulfilment in the familial and social areas, and the possibility of controlling one’s life course.

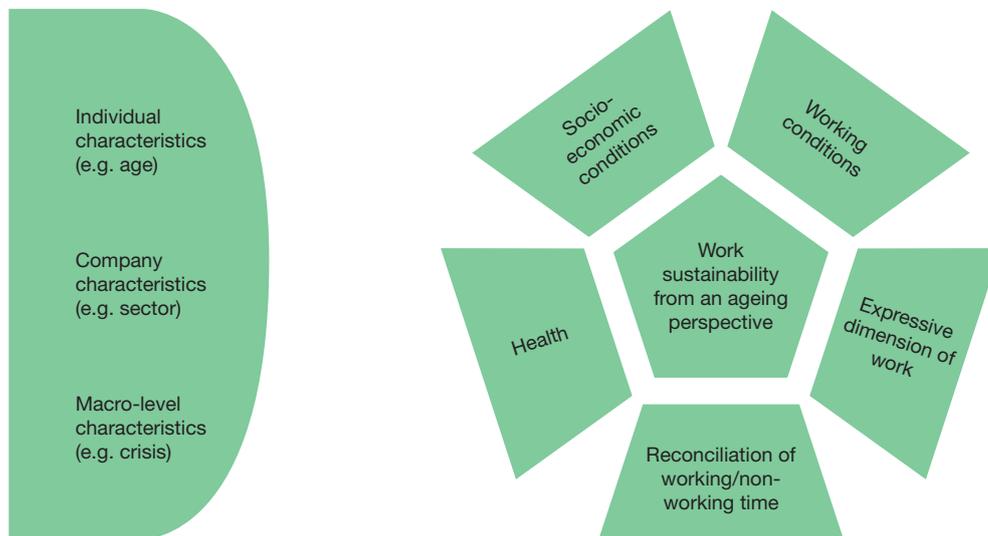
The analytical framework for the current study is based on secondary analysis of data from the fifth EWCS. The proposed model for the analysis of work sustainability from an ageing perspective partly refers to a previous model developed by Eurofound (2002), but it also aims to integrate health and the subjective dimension of work, which both appear significant regarding sustainability.

Five dimensions constitute the analytical framework for the analysis of data (Figure 1):

- ✎ *working conditions*, which cover changes in work, risk exposure, unusual working time, time flexibility, work rhythm and emotional pressure;
- ✎ *health*, including physical health, psychological health and perceptions of health;
- ✎ *the expressive dimension* of work, including autonomy, work content, work satisfaction, recognition, skills development and social environment;
- ✎ *reconciliation of working and non-working time*, including reconciliation of work with other commitments and working time arrangements;
- ✎ *socioeconomic conditions*, which covers status in employment and job security.

As these dimensions do not operate in a vacuum, the proposed model must be interpreted in context and in the light of underlying characteristics, which can be classified as:

- ✎ individual – related to workers, such as age and education;
- ✎ organisational (company) – related to the organisations and companies where people work, such as sector of activity and size;
- ✎ macro-level characteristics – related to the social, political and economic context; for instance, the

Figure 1: Analytical framework for data analysis

articulation of the different dimensions may vary according to the economic situation of a given country.

These five dimensions include both objective and subjective variables. The methodology for data analysis distinguishes those variables linked to the characteristics of work situations and those linked to the outcomes in terms of sustainability.

Report outline

The next chapter, Chapter 2, describes the characteristics of the older workforce, including employment rates in comparison with other age groups. In the subsequent three chapters, analysis of employees in all EU countries is structured in the three phases depicted in Figure 2 and described in more detail in Annex 2.

Phase 1, presented in Chapter 3, describes and analyses the differentiated exposure of different age groups to various characteristics of work and employment. The purpose is to explore and assess some forms of age-related selection mechanisms linked to work situations. To achieve this, data from the fifth EWCS is analysed using cross-tabulations between age (split into five-year brackets) and a broad list of indicators of working conditions.

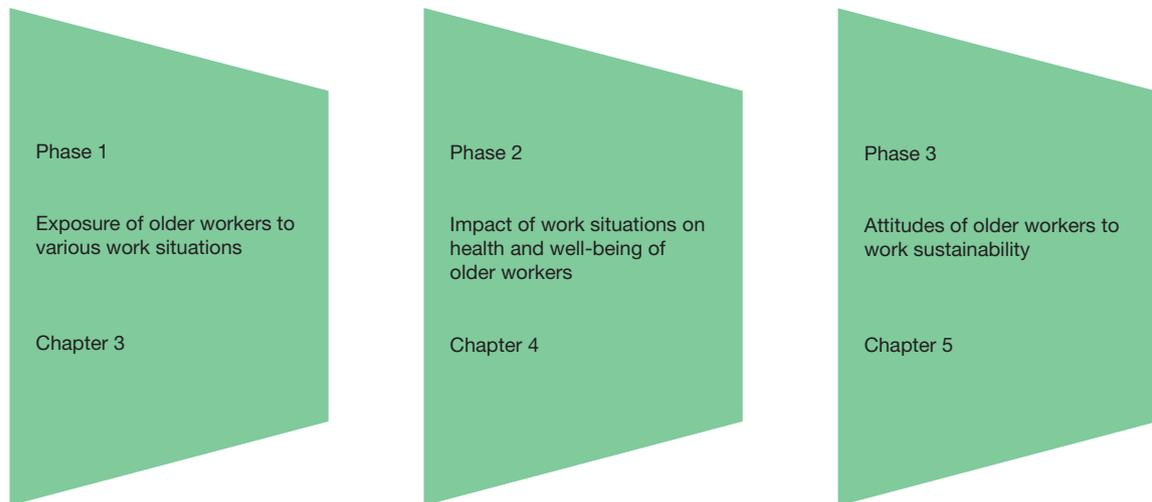
Phase 2, presented in Chapter 4, analyses how older workers in comparison with younger age groups assess

their well-being or lack of well-being according to their work situation. This phase focuses on how older workers feel at work. It includes both descriptive and assessment indicators that cover health, well-being and satisfaction with working conditions.

Phase 3, presented in Chapter 5, investigates the consequences of differentiated exposure and differentiated assessment of well-being on the attitudes of older workers to the sustainability of their own jobs. The purpose is to identify those ageing workers who are more or less exposed to potential 'exit' behaviours: those who think they will not be able to continue working longer; those who consider that their health is at risk because of work; and those who want to work less.

Workers over 60 are considered in the analyses developed in Chapters 3 and 4. However, they are not taken into account in Chapter 5, which addresses attitudes to work among the over-50s, because one of the central questions of this chapter is 'Do you think you will be able to do the same job you are doing now when you are 60 years old?', and this question is obviously not asked of workers over 60.

In Chapter 6, cross-country comparisons are made. The working conditions of the ageing workforce across countries of the European Union are examined from a comparative perspective. The underlying question is the degree of diversity across the different Member States in the sustainability of work for ageing workers.

Figure 2: A three-step analysis

All analyses concern salaried employment in the EU27 (employees). However, some descriptive data concerning the self-employed³ are added at the end of each chapter.

Most of the questions are unchanged across the 2000, 2005 and 2010 waves of the EWCS. However, some changes have been made (for instance, questions have been removed or added, or different answering categories have been used), which prevent the dynamic analysis over time of all aspects covered in 2010. Nevertheless, trend data were used throughout the report where possible and relevant.

³ In this report, the self-employed category includes 'self-employed without employees', 'self-employed with employees' and the category 'other', as opposed to the classification 'employee'. This decision was taken because, although not classifying themselves as self-employed, respondents classified as 'other' present several characteristics which can be considered similar to the self-employed.

Characteristics of the older workforce

Characteristics of the older workforce

In order to understand the working conditions of older workers compared to younger workers, it is necessary, first, to establish the background and to examine who older workers are; in other words, to distinguish the characteristics of this specific section of the workforce. The purpose of this chapter is to identify the main characteristics of the ageing workforce and to highlight some specific features of workers aged 50 and over. After a general overview, three aspects will be considered: variations in employment rates according to age groups among older workers; distribution of employment by occupational categories and by economic sectors; and cross-country comparisons. Data come from the fifth EWCS, except where indicated otherwise. For more on the methodology of the survey, see Annex 2.

Overview

Focusing first on salaried workers, workers aged 50 and over represent 25% of all employees, while the younger (aged less than 30 years) represent 22% and the intermediate age group (30–49 years), 53%. Table 1 displays some general features of the distribution of salaried employment according to age. Except for the stronger weight of the public sector, there are no sharp differences between employees aged 50+ and 30–49. The main contrast is in the distribution of employment by gender among employees aged 50+. Older women are more likely to work part time, to be employed in the public sector and to work in smaller workplaces.

Salaried workers over 60 years represent a small percentage of the sample of the fifth EWCS: just 3.9% (4.4% men and 3.3% women). This is explained by the low employment rate among workers aged 60–64, and by the average

exit age from the labour market in the EU, which is 61.7 years for men and 61.3 years for women, according to Eurostat estimates.

Among workers aged 50 or over, the proportion of self-employed is 21% (24% among men and 17% among women), somewhat higher than the EU average of 15% self-employed in the whole working population. (The specific situation of the self-employed is analysed later in this chapter.)

Employment rates of older workers

Several benchmarking studies note that the employment rate of workers aged 55–64, known as the ‘Stockholm indicator’ in European policies, varies considerably across EU countries. A more disaggregated approach to employment rates of older workers is needed for the purposes of this study. Employment rates were computed for the 45–49 years, 50–54 years, 55–59 years and 60–64 years age groups in order to understand at what age the decline in employment rates starts and how it continues (Table 2).

The relative decrease in employment rates for a given age group compared to the next one is presented in Figure 3 for the EU and each of the Member States.

Table 1: Employment characteristics of workers (%), by age group and by gender for workers aged 50+

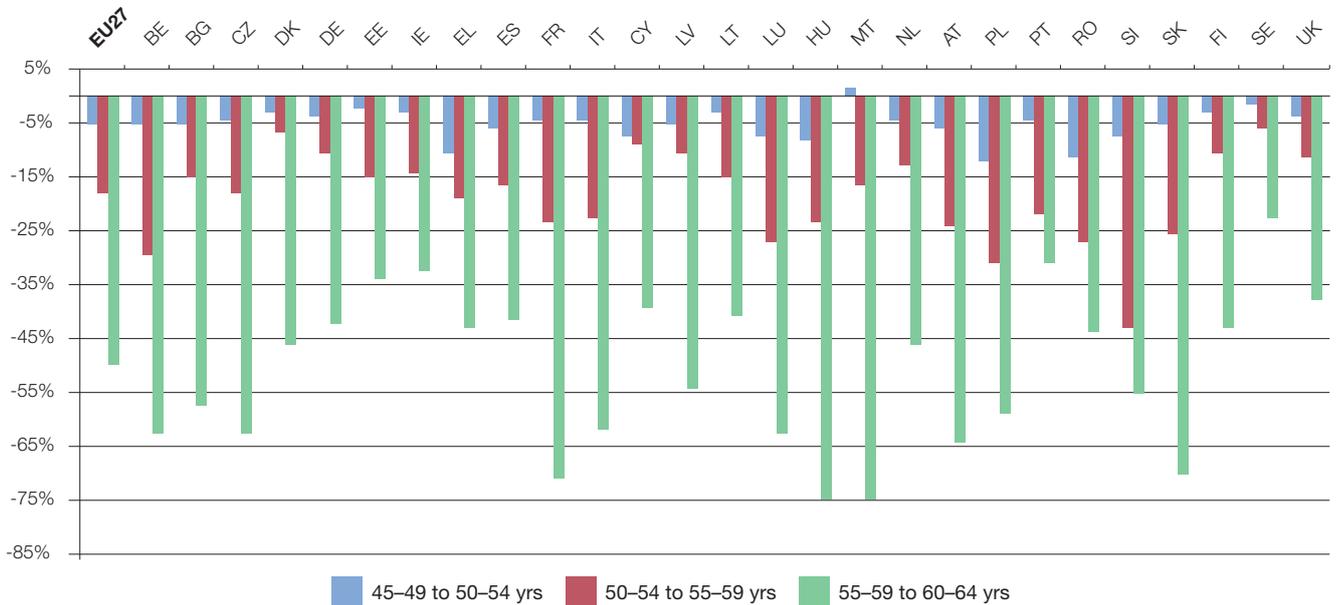
	< 30 years	30–49 years	50+ years	All	Men 50+ years	Women 50+ years
Type of contract						
Indefinite contract	61	86	87	81	89	85
Fixed-term contract and other	39	14	13	19	11	15
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
Private or public sector						
Private sector	77	68	59	68	65	52
Public sector	17	26	33	26	27	40
Joint private–public, NGO and other	6	6	8	6	8	8
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
Part time or full time						
Part time	28	22	26	24	12	42
Full time	72	78	74	76	88	58
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
Size of workplace						
1–9 employees	37	31	28	31	23	34
10–49 employees	33	31	32	32	32	33
50–249 employees	19	22	24	22	26	21
250+ employees	11	16	16	15	19	12
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
Total number of respondents	6,363	15,455	7,058	28,877	3,878	3,180

Note: Bold numbers indicate a significant gender gap among workers aged 50+.

Table 2: Employment rates (%) of older workers by age group and gender

	45–49 years	50–54 years	55–59 years	60–64 years
Men	85.8	81.9	70.1	38.1
Women	74.3	69.3	53.4	23.5
All	80.0	75.5	61.5	30.5

Source: Labour Force Survey, Eurostat, fourth quarter, 2010

Figure 3: Relative decrease in employment rates among older workers

Note: In CZ, FR, HU, LT, LV, MT, SI and SK, standard pension age is lower than 65.

Source: Labour Force Survey, Eurostat, fourth quarter, 2010

According to these data, different configurations can be distinguished. In some countries (group A in Table 3), the employment rate starts decreasing significantly from 45–49 years to 50–54 years and continues to fall afterwards. In other countries (group B), the sharp decrease starts later, between 50–54 years and 55–59 years, and employment rates continue to drop for the next age group. In the third group (group C), the decline is rather smooth between 45–49 years and 55–59 years and only becomes sharp after the age of 60. The distribution of countries according to these three patterns is described in Table 3.

One can compare this grouping with the country clusters of ageing conditions elaborated in another European study, *Employment and social developments in Europe 2011* (European Commission, 2011b), through a method of principal component analysis. This study distinguishes five clusters: high active ageing, intermediate active ageing, Mediterranean, developing welfare states and low

dependency countries. The high active ageing cluster corresponds to group C/high final employment rate here. Mediterranean countries are almost all in group B, except for Greece, whereas developing welfare states are distributed into groups B (LT, EE) and C (BG, LV).

Distribution of employment by occupation

In this report, all occupations are grouped into five occupational categories, based on the one-digit ISCO-08 classification (Table 4). This aggregation of occupational categories is needed in order to get sufficient numbers of respondents in each category when disaggregating by 5-year or 10-year age groups in the next chapters. These five aggregated occupational categories will be used in several figures in Chapters 4 and 5.

Table 3: Distribution of EU Member States according to the trend shape in employment rates among older workers

Decreasing trend shape 45–49 to 50–54 yrs, 50–54 to 55–59 yrs, 55–59 to 60–64 yrs		'Final' employment rate 60–64 yrs		Gender gap in employment rates 50–59 yrs	
		High (> EU average)	Low (≤ EU average)	Wide (> 10%)	Narrow (≤ 10%)
A. Sharp – sharp – sharp	EL, LU, HU, PL, RO, SI		EL, LU, HU*, PL, SI*, RO	EL, LU, PL, RO, SI	HU
B. Smooth – sharp – sharp	BE, FR, IT, ES, PT, AT, LT, SK, EE, IE	ES, PT, LT*, EE, IE	BE, FR*, IT, AT, SK*	BE, IT, ES, PT, AT, SK, IE	FR, EE, LT
C. Smooth – smooth – sharp	DK, DE, NL, FI, SE, UK, CY, BG, CZ, LV, MT	DK, DE, NL, FI, SE, UK, CY	BG, CZ*, LV*, MT*	DE, NL, CY, CZ, MT	DK, FI, SE, UK, BG, LV

Note: * Standard pension age lower than 65 years.

Source: Labour Force Survey, Eurostat, fourth quarter, 2010

Table 4: Occupational categories

Name	ISCO-08	ISCO category	Examples
Managers and professionals	01 02	Managers Professionals	All managers and intellectual, scientific and artistic occupations (most with Masters degrees), for example, engineers, medical practitioners, architects, nursing professionals, all teachers, information and communications technology (ICT) professionals
Technicians, assistants and supervisors	03	Technicians and associate professionals	Specialised technicians (in industry, agriculture, ICT or the health sector), nursing associates, assistants (social services, specialised secretaries), accounting associates
Mid-skilled service workers	04 05	Clerical support workers Service and sales workers	All clerks, cooks, waiters, sellers, personal care workers, child-care workers, healthcare assistants, police officers, prison and security guards
Mid-skilled manual workers	06 07	Skilled agricultural and fishery workers Craft and related trades workers	Skilled workers in agriculture, craft and related trades; house builders, bricklayers, plasterers, plumbers, motor repairers, metal workers, butchers, bakers
Low-skilled workers	08	Plant/machine operators or assemblers	Plant and machine operators, assemblers, drivers, cleaners, helpers, labourers

The distribution of employment by occupational category highlights huge contrasts between men and women among salaried workers aged 50 years and over, while differences between older employees and the preceding generation (30–49 years) are rather small (Table 5). Accordingly, gender segregation clearly appears in the occupations of workers aged 50+. Men

are over-represented among managers, whereas women are over-represented among professionals (including all teachers) and among technicians, assistants and supervisors (including associate professionals in health and social work). Among mid-skilled workers, women are concentrated in service occupations, while men are in manual occupations.

Table 5: Employment (%) by age group and by gender for workers aged 50+, according to occupation

	< 30 years	30–49 years	50+ years	All	Men 50+ years	Women 50+ years
<i>Managers and professionals</i>						
01 Managers	3	6	7	6	9	4
02 Professionals	13	17	16	16	14	19
<i>Technicians, assistants and supervisors</i>						
03 Technicians and associate professionals	15	18	16	17	14	18
<i>Mid-skilled service workers</i>						
04 Clerical support workers	11	11	10	11	7	15
05 Service and sales workers	25	15	14	17	8	21
<i>Mid-skilled manual workers</i>						
06 Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	2	1	1	1	2	0
07 Craft and related trades workers	14	13	14	14	21	4
<i>Low-skilled workers</i>						
08 Plant/machine operators or assemblers	6	9	10	8	15	3
09 Elementary occupations	10	9	11	10	9	15
<i>Total</i>	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: Bold numbers indicate significant gender gap among workers aged 50+.

Figure 4 represents the age polarisation of the occupational groups in the fifth EWCS: managers and professionals; technicians, assistants and supervisors; mid-skilled service workers; mid-skilled manual workers; and low-skilled workers. Occupational groups located in the upper left section include more young workers and fewer older workers than other groups (and in the EU as a whole), while groups located in the lower right section include more older and fewer younger workers. The lower left section indicates a lower proportion of both younger and older workers, hence there is a predominance of middle-aged workers.

Mid-skilled service workers (men and women) appear to be a relatively younger group, whereas low-skilled women and male managers and professionals tend to be older. The middle-aged age group is more represented among technicians, assistants and supervisors (women and men) and among female managers and professionals.

In Figure 4, the length of the line segments that can be traced between M markers and W markers of each occupational group represents the importance of the differences between the age structures of men and of women within the group. The inclination of this line indicates a generational effect. For example, the line between male and female in the technicians, assistants and supervisors category is almost vertical, indicating that there is almost

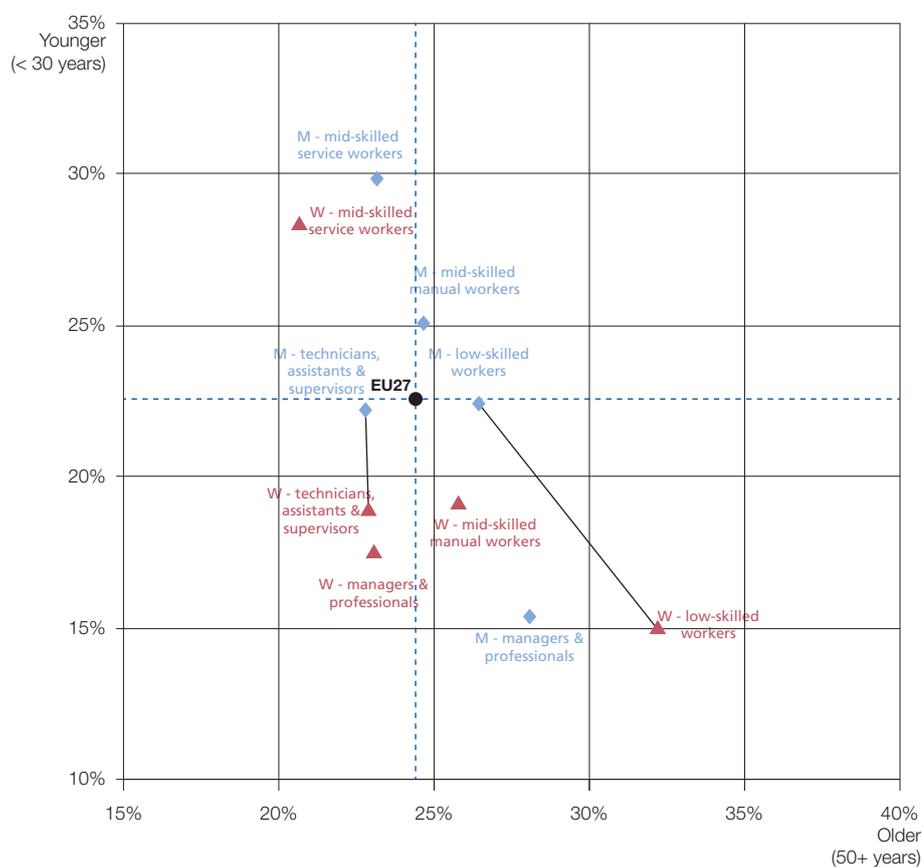
no gap among workers aged 50 and over (the proportions of men and women are similar). However, there is a difference on the vertical axis, which indicates a gap between men and women within the younger cohort, in which the proportion of men is higher than women. Differences between men and women are narrower for mid-skilled service workers and technicians, assistants and supervisors than for other groups.

Distribution of employment by sector

The distribution of salaried employment by sector indicates some generational differences (Table 6). The proportion of employees in industrial activities, in public administration and in education increases with age, while the proportion in the wholesale and retail, transport, and catering sector and the business services sector decreases with age. Again, the gender contrasts within the generation of workers aged 50+ are significant, indicating, not surprisingly, male-dominated sectors (industry and construction) and female-dominated sectors (education, health and social work).

Figure 5 presents the age polarisation of economic sectors, according to the grouping of Table 6. The interpretation is the same as in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Plot of occupational groups according to older (50+ years) and younger (< 30 years) employees, by gender



Note: M = men; W = women

Table 6: Employment (%) by age group and by gender for workers aged 50+, according to sector

	< 30 years	30–49 years	50+ years	All	Men 50+ years	Women 50+ years
A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	3	2	2	2	3	(1)
B-C-D-E Industrial activities and utilities	16	19	21	19	28	13
F Construction	7	8	6	7	10	2
G-H-I Wholesale and retail, transport and logistics, accommodation and catering	34	23	19	24	21	17
J-K-L-M-N Business services (ICT, finance, real estate, professional, technical and administrative support services)	15	14	12	14	12	12
O Public administration	5	7	10	7	10	9
P Education	6	9	12	9	8	16
Q Health and social work	9	12	12	11	4	21
R-S-T-U Other profit or non-profit services (including leisure, culture, associations, personal services, etc.)	6	5	5	5	3	8
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: NACE Rev 2.1 sectors; bold numbers indicate significant gender gap among workers aged 50+. (1) indicates too few cases to be reliable.

Figure 5: Plot of sectoral groups according to older (50+ years) and younger (< 30 years) employees, by gender

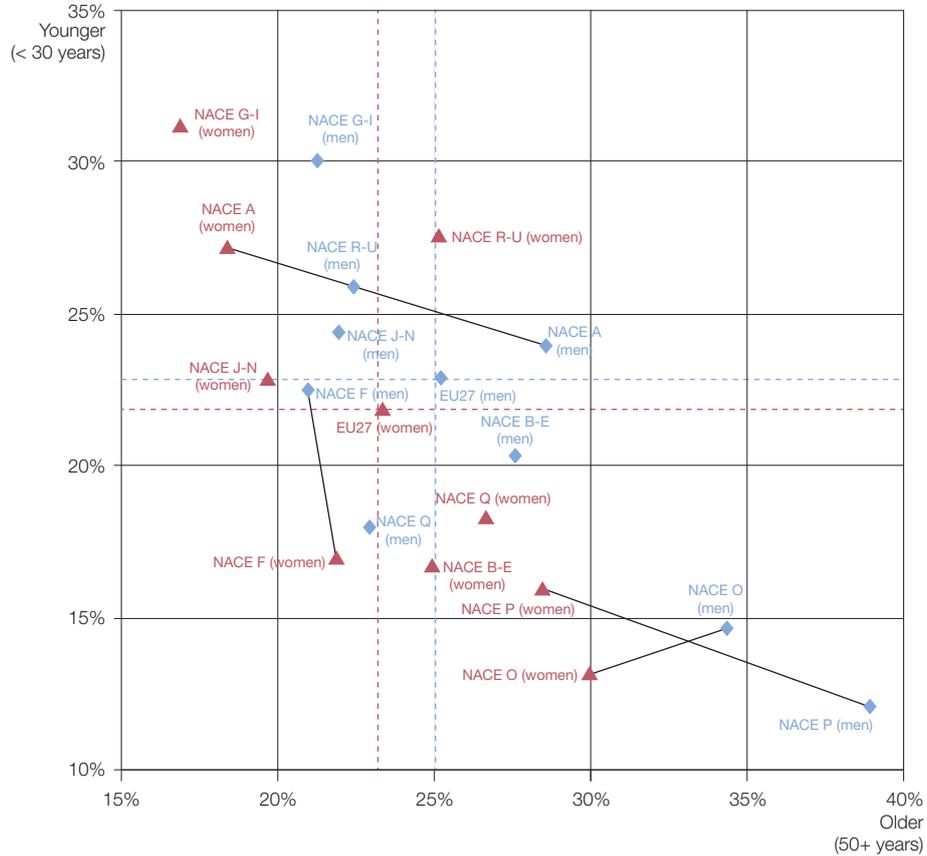


Figure 5 indicates that public administration (O) and education (P) are rather ‘old’ sectors, while commerce and transport (G–I) and business services (J–N) are comparatively ‘younger’. The gender gap is particularly wide in agriculture (A) and construction (F), sectors in which female and male jobs are rather segregated, but also in public administration (O) and education (P), in which the gender segregation of jobs is much more significant among older workers than younger ones.

Self-employed workers

Self-employed workers are, on average, older than salaried workers. The 50+ age group represents 38% of self-employed, against 25% of employees, whereas the younger age group (aged under 30) only represents 14% of self-employed, against 22% of employees.

The EWCS distinguishes three types of self-employment: self-employed without employees, self-employed with employees and others. Among the self-employed in the 50+ group, these three categories represent respectively 61%, 23% and 16%, and these figures are similar to the averages for all age groups. The age group that is most different is the younger one, in which the breakdown is 52%, 11% and 37%.

Similar to Tables 5 and 6, the next two tables illustrate the distribution of self-employed workers in different age groups according to occupation and sector.

By occupation (Table 7), the main difference between the 50+ age group and the others is in the over-representation

of skilled agricultural workers. As is the case for employees, gender gaps among the self-employed aged 50 and over are significant. Men dominate among managers and craft workers, while women dominate among service and sales workers and elementary occupations (including ancillary work).

Looking at sectors (Table 8), the same over-representation of the self-employed aged 50+ is seen in agriculture, forestry and fishing. Only two sectors show significant gender imbalances among the self-employed aged 50+. Unsurprisingly, construction is male-dominated, while other profit and non-profit services are female-dominated.

Table 7: Self-employed (%) by age group and by gender for workers aged 50+, according to occupation

	< 30 years	30–49 years	50+ years	All	Men 50+ years	Women 50+ years
<i>Managers and professionals</i>						
01 Managers	8	17	16	15	20	11
02 Professionals	14	18	13	15	13	13
<i>Technicians, assistants and supervisors</i>						
03 Technicians and associate professionals	11	9	11	10	9	12
<i>Mid-skilled service workers</i>						
04 Clerical support workers	5	2	2	3	1	3
05 Service and sales workers	23	17	12	16	7	20
<i>Mid-skilled manual workers</i>						
06 Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	8	14	20	16	20	21
07 Craft and related trades workers	18	14	13	14	17	6
<i>Low-skilled workers</i>						
08 Plant/machine operators, drivers	2	3	4	3	6	(1)
09 Elementary occupations	11	6	9	8	7	13
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: ISCO-08 occupational categories; bold numbers indicate a significant gender gap among workers aged 50+; (1) indicates too few cases to be reliable.

Table 8: Self-employed (%) by age group and by gender for workers aged 50+, according to sector

	< 30 years	30–49 years	50+ years	All	Men 50+ years	Women 50+ years
A Agriculture, forestry and fishing	10	16	23	18	22	24
B-C-D-E Industrial activities and utilities	10	9	9	9	10	9
F Construction	10	11	9	10	13	(1)
G-H-I Wholesale and retail, transport and logistics, accommodation and catering	25	27	24	25	24	25
J-K-L-M-N Business services (ICT, finance, real estate, professional, technical and administrative support services)	17	18	16	17	16	14
O-P Public administration and education	7	4	3	4	3	4
Q Health and social work	7	6	7	7	6	9
R-S-T-U Other profit or non-profit services (including leisure, culture, associations, personal services, etc.)	14	9	9	10	6	14
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

Note: NACE Rev 2.1 sectors; bold numbers indicate a significant gender gap among workers aged 50+; (1) indicates too few cases to be reliable.

Characteristics of work at different ages

Characteristics of work at different ages

Introduction

Which characteristics of work appear to differ with age throughout the life span, or at least in the final decades? This chapter aims to explore and assess some forms of age-related selection mechanisms linked to specific characteristics of work. When these mechanisms occur, it means that certain characteristics of work might affect older workers particularly and lead either to attempts to change jobs to avoid these issues or even to their withdrawal from paid work.

The analyses presented here are first based on cross-tabulations that compare the relationship between age (split into five-year age brackets) and a number of characteristics of work related to working conditions, reconciliation of working and non-working time, the expressive dimension of work, and socioeconomic conditions. These

analyses were carried out separately for men and women. Then, to take account of a number of structural differences between age groups, multivariate regression analyses were conducted using the variables of age, occupation, part-time working and type of contract to examine the relationship of these variables with exposure to each characteristic of work. With such a model, it is possible to calculate odds-ratios – see the box for a note on how to interpret odds ratios.

The results of the cross-tabulations are presented in a number of figures (charts). The multivariate model will only be called upon when necessary, in order to confirm or moderate comments. When possible, the chapter also indicates whether the work characteristic under examination appears to develop, or on the contrary decline, from one period to another, which can be determined by taking a closer look at the results of earlier EWCS waves in 2000 and 2005.

Note: Understanding odds ratios

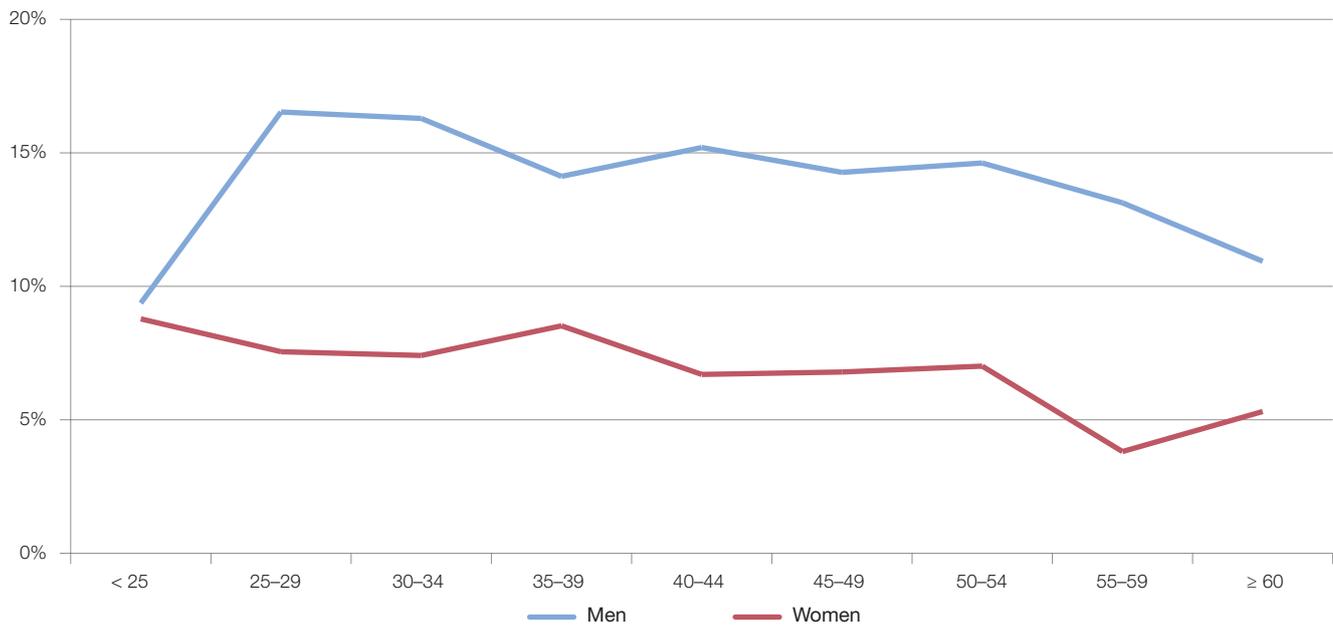
An odds ratio indicates the chance of one group experiencing some event compared to another group. Suppose, for example, there are two groups of workers, group A and group B. You want to examine the odds of group B finding work rewarding compared to group A. In this instance, group A is the comparison or 'reference' group. The odds ratio for the reference group is always 1. Suppose the odds ratio of group B finding work rewarding is calculated to be 1.5. This means that group B has greater odds of finding work rewarding than group A; in fact, group B is one-and-a-half times more likely to find work rewarding. If group C is then compared with group A and the odds ratio for group C is calculated to be 0.5, it indicates that group C is half as likely as group A to find work rewarding.

Working conditions

The results give rise to three major statements about working conditions. First is the slow decrease of night work and shift work with age, both for men and women (Figures 6 and 7).

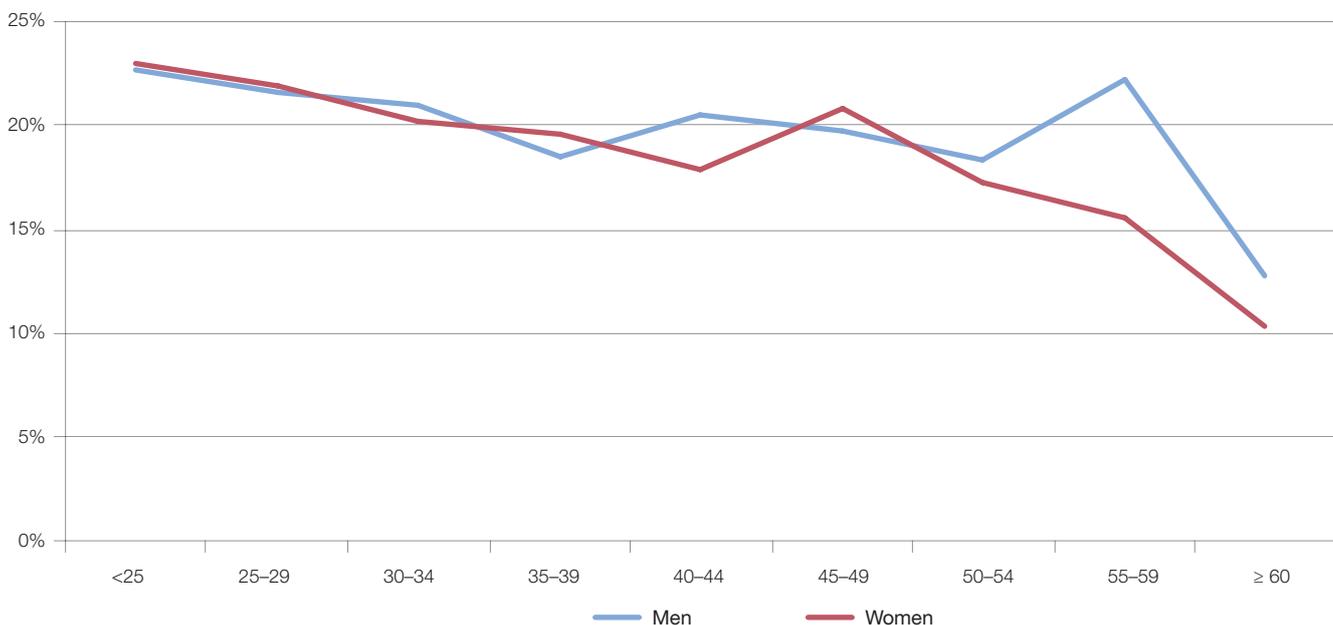
Except for night work among very young men (under 25), the figures show that the general trend is actually a decrease, and this is confirmed by the multivariate analysis. Odds ratios for the 55–59 years age group are significantly lower than 1 (the reference group being the 40–44 years age bracket).

Figure 6: Prevalence of night work (%), by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who indicated at least five times per month in answer to Q32.

Figure 7: Prevalence of shift work (%), by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q37f.

A vast body of knowledge, including findings from ergonomic research, is available to explain this observation. It is possible, for example, to assess the effects of age on night-shift tolerance, with the prevalence of sleep disturbances, accumulated fatigue and sometimes health issues increasing with age (Barbini et al, 2007; Brugere et al, 1997). This could explain why some older workers move away from these types of schedules whenever possible. In some countries, sectors or companies, exposure to night work gives workers a right to cease working life earlier, which reinforces this trend.

If the proportion of workers over 50 is to grow in Europe, such a result suggests that an overall fall-off of shift and night work would be welcome. Comparisons with earlier waves of the EWCS suggest that this could be the case for men (for shift work between 2000 and 2005, for night work between 2005 and 2010), but not for women.

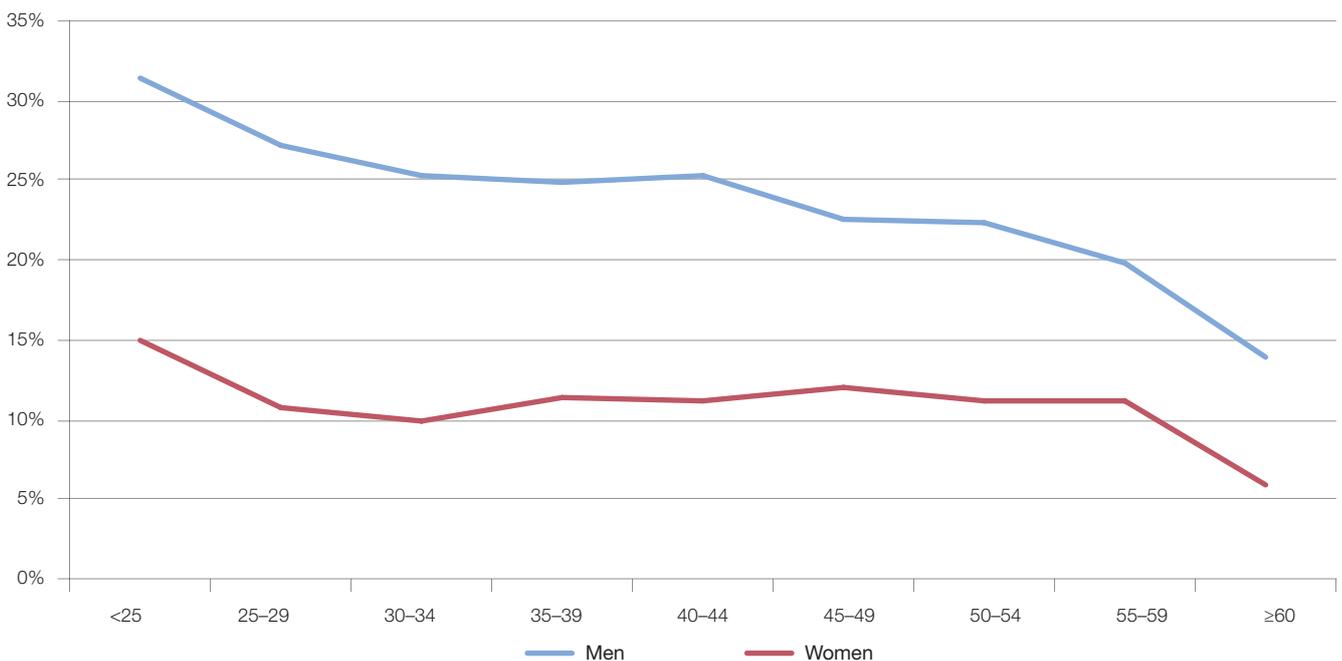
A second conclusion from Figures 8 and 9 is that there are few marked differences between age groups in exposure to physical risks. The only exception is a decrease with age in the proportion of male employees carrying heavy loads (Figure 8), which is clearly confirmed, in addition, by multivariate analysis.

For all the other types of physical strains captured in the fifth EWCS, the figures show little or very little variation until the age of 60. This is the case for exposure

to painful positions (Figure 9), to noise or other types of hostile environment, and to carrying heavy loads (for women) and to lifting or moving people (for women again).

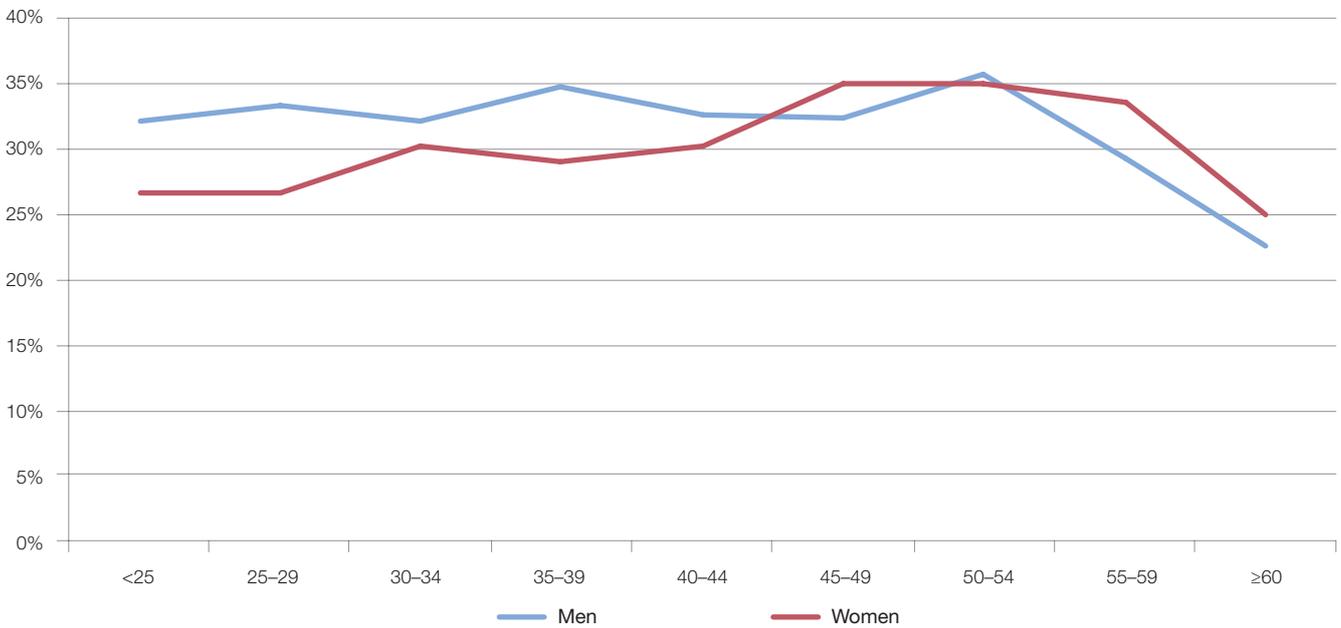
These results raise challenges for the current period. A number of studies have shown in the past that some ageing blue-collar workers would tend to switch to maintenance jobs. In industry, the most demanding tasks, particularly in terms of posture, were characterised by an over-representation of young workers. These analyses highlighted the most selective and taxing situations caused by ageing (Molinié, 1999). In some work teams, a distribution of tasks could protect the senior and possibly 'worn-out' workers from the most strenuous physical demands, leaving them the tasks for which their know-how rather than their physical ability was most needed. In addition to these ad hoc group strategies, occupational health professionals might have suggested supplementary solutions to allow those workers (particularly the senior ones) to cope with the harshest difficulties, involving adjustments of their workstation or taking into account their reduced abilities. But the option of adopting these types of measures – except for men carrying heavy loads, according to the EWCS results – seems doubtful nowadays for two reasons: the general ageing of the workforce and the overall level of physical strain in industrialised countries. These levels are similar across the last three waves of the survey.

Figure 8: Work involves carrying or moving heavy loads (%), by age group and gender



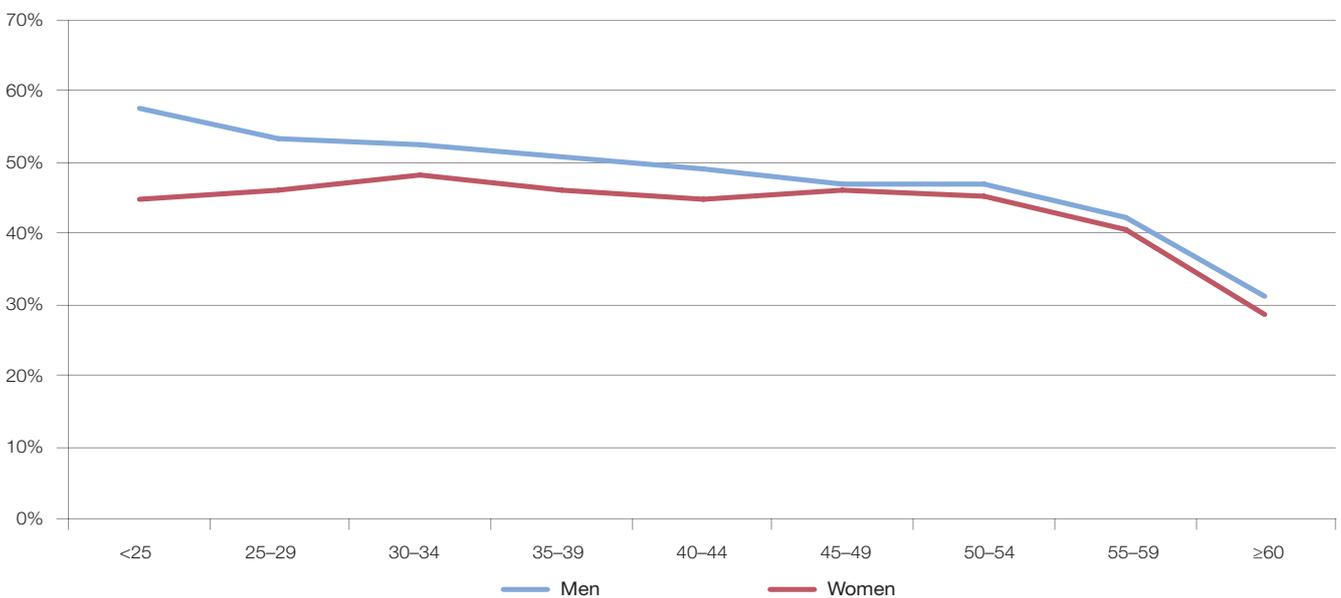
Note: Respondents who answered 'All of the time', 'Almost all of the time', 'Around ¾ of the time' or 'Around half of the time' to Q24c.

Figure 9: Work involves tiring or painful positions (%), by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who answered 'All of the time', 'Almost all of the time', 'Around ¾ of the time' or 'Around half of the time' to Q24a.

Figure 10: Work involves working at very high speed (%), by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who answered 'All of the time', 'Almost all of the time', 'Around ¾ of the time' or 'Around half of the time' to Q45a.

The third and last conclusion is that the proportion of people working at very high speed decreases with age. The proportion of male respondents who report that they work at very high speed at least half the time decreases as age increases, while among women the decrease occurs after the age of 50 (see Figure 10). This is confirmed by the regression analysis. For example, for both sexes the

odds ratios corresponding to the 55–59 and 60+ brackets are respectively around 0.8 and under 0.6 (reference category 40–44 years). The results are more or less the same for other similar variables, such as 'Working to tight deadlines', 'Pace of work dependent on direct demands from people' (for both sexes), or 'Not having enough time to get the job done' (for men).

This result, already analysed by Villosio (Eurofound, 2008c) using data from the 2005 EWCS, can be interpreted in the light of scientific literature on ageing at work. One of the consequences of changes in the human organism as it ages may be a gradual slowing down (see, for example, Salthouse, 1985). Older workers are not thought to need more time to perform movements or carry out decisions, but they are thought to need more time to choose and direct them. The ergonomic analysis of their activity reveals the combined effects of age-related functional declines and the building of experience. Statistical analyses of older workers' 'vulnerability' to time pressure in France (Volkoff et al, 2010) show that intense time pressure raises serious problems for most employees in their 50s.

There is a potential contradiction here, in the long run, between work intensification in Europe (Green and McIntosh, 2001) and the ageing of the workforce or the lengthening of working life. 'Shelters' for older workers, away from tight time constraints, seem useful, but may become increasingly less numerous. Therefore the ageing of the labour force could afford an opportunity to examine even more closely the prospect raised by European scientists in various fields (Shani et al, 2002), where the primacy of intensity should gradually give way to sustainable work systems.

Reconciliation of working and non-working time

The reconciliation of working time and non-working time is not a new challenge. However, it has become a central aspect of the quality of work (Green, 2006). The EU has tried to address the issue in a number of policy formulations. The previous waves of the EWCS and the European Quality of Life Survey (Eurofound, 2010) already provide a clear perspective on the topic. The Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work–Life Balance also points out the various forms of social dialogue, working time arrangements and measures that are in place within companies across Europe and that try to encourage work–life balance (Eurofound, 2008b). To reach the objective of an increased economic activity rate for women in particular (Eurofound, 2007b) but also for the older workers, there is a need to make it easier for individuals to combine their working time with family duties and recreational or social activities. This has positive implications for encouraging entry into the labour market and enabling people to remain

at work. The surveys that investigate the components of quality of life clearly show that employment and family are two key elements influencing the quality of life and well-being, among other issues such as wages and work–life balance (Eurofound, 2007a).

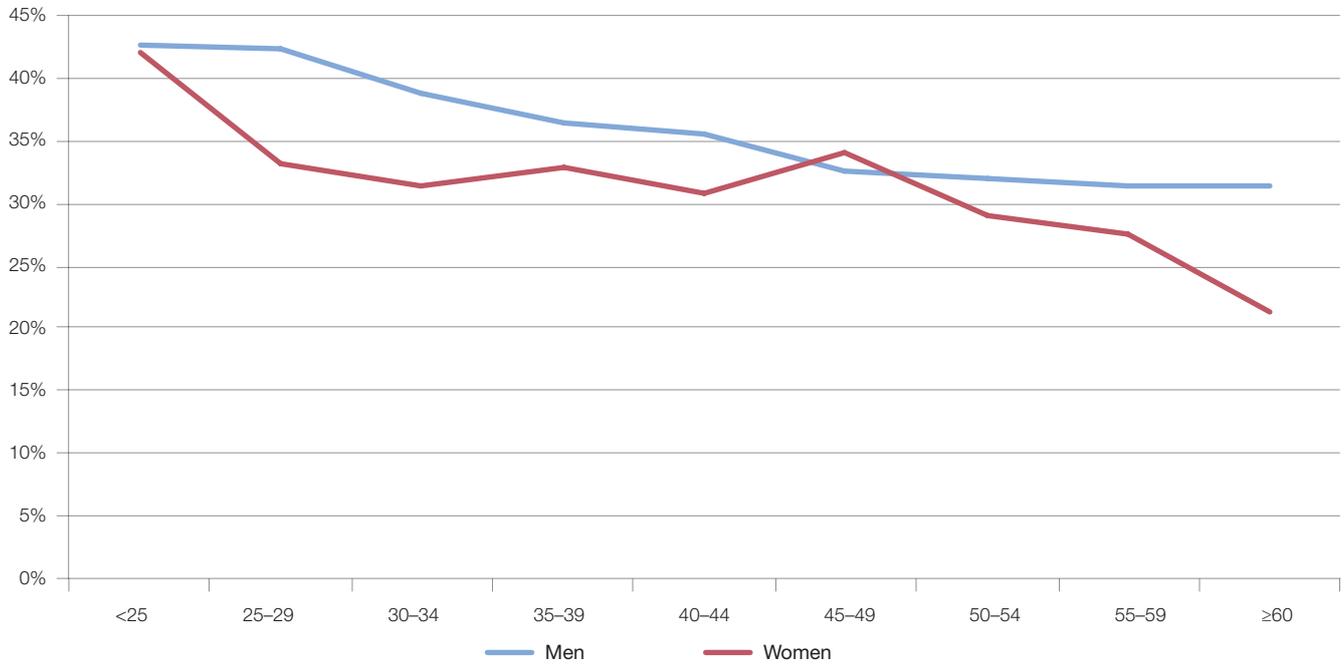
This section gives an insight on specific indicators in the EWCS that could be predictors of the desire to reduce one's working time or to leave work. Three indicators are examined. The first one is related to regular changes in work schedule (Q40) since it demonstrates the disturbing effects of irregularity of working hours on private life. A second measures the compatibility of working hours with family or social commitments (Q41). The last indicator explores the room for taking short periods of time off work to take care of personal or family matters (Q43).

Considering the issue of regular changes in work schedule, reaching the age of 50 appears to be a turning point for both men and women, although in different ways (Figure 11). For men in their 50s, after a regular decrease, there is a stabilisation at around 32% for those affected by regular changes in their working time. Between 33% and 34% of women aged 25 to 49 have irregular working time. In the 50+ age group, the proportion of women with irregular working time starts to decrease, dropping from 34% to 21% by the age of 60 and beyond. Two hypotheses are possible here: either some of the female workers with irregular working time have left the labour market by the age of 60 or there have been some changes in their working conditions.

In terms of reconciling work and private life, 17.6% of all EU workers indicate that their working hours do not fit well with their other commitments. This may predict workers' decisions regarding participation in the labour market (decisions to reduce their working time or to change or to leave their job). There are, however, positive signs for the older workers. Fewer seem to be in this situation when age increases (Figure 12). Here three hypotheses are possible: their working time changed positively enabling the reconciliation of work and private life; those who were more unsatisfied left the labour market; or their need for balancing working and non-working hours changed.

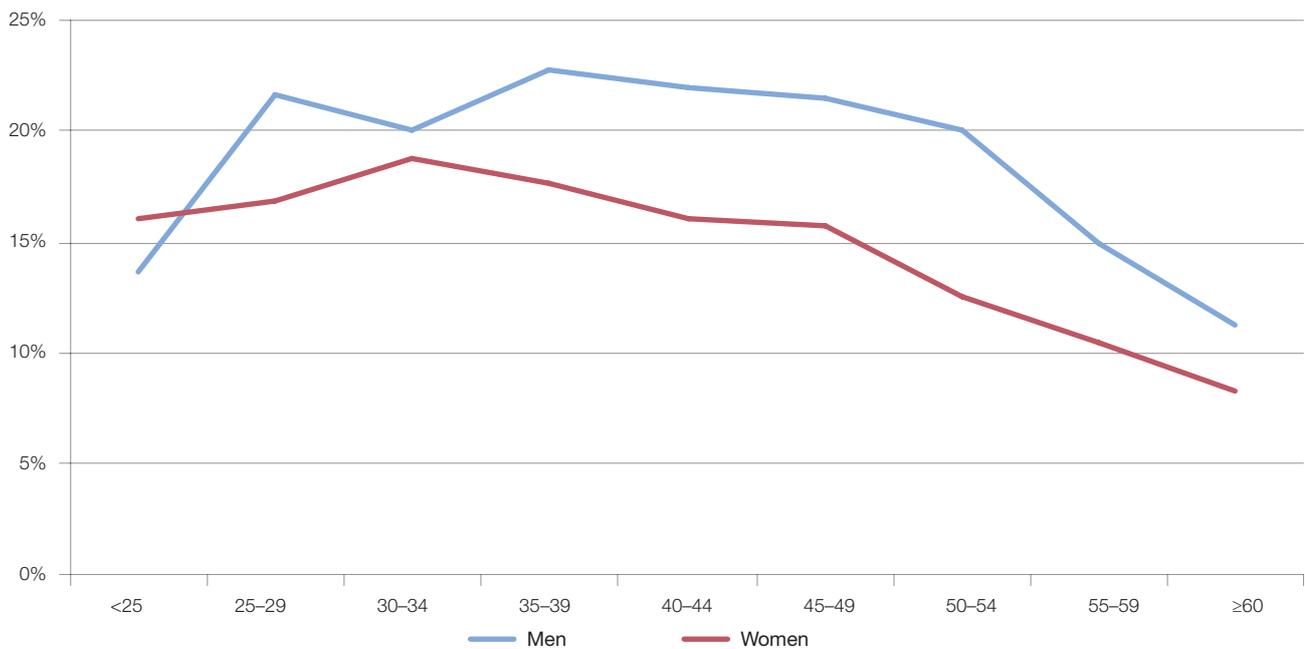
As for having the ability to take a couple of hours off to take care of personal matters, it increases slowly with age, both for men and women at the end of their 40s. This is partly due to workers having positions that give more room for autonomy and to seniority in jobs (Figure 13).

Figure 11: Percentage of employees whose work schedule changes regularly, by age group and gender



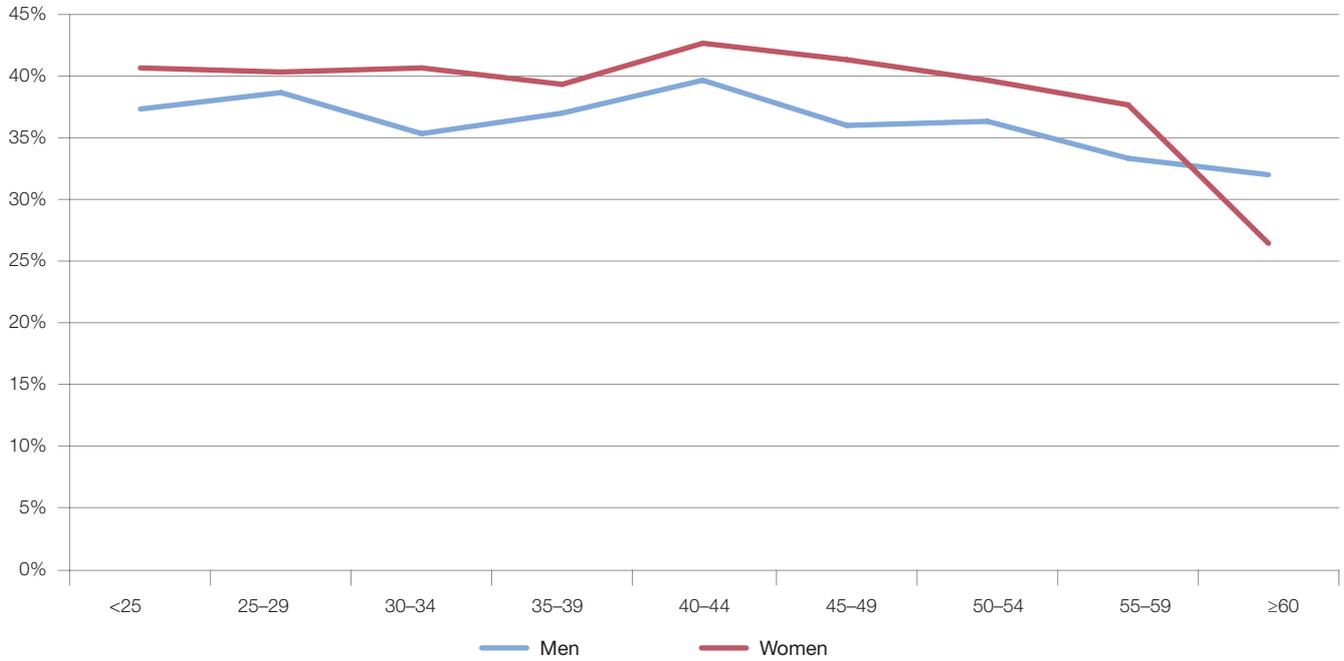
Note: Respondents who answered 'Yes' to Q40.

Figure 12: Percentage of employees who experience a poor fit of working hours with family or social commitments, by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who answered 'Not very well' or 'Not well at all' to Q41.

Figure 13: Percentage of employees who experience difficulty in taking a couple of hours off to attend to personal matters, by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who answered 'Somewhat difficult' or 'Very difficult' to Q43.

Expressive dimension of work

What workers want from a job is not only an income, but also a means of integrating socially, realising their goals, developing their capacities, and being recognised for their work. Many scholars have suggested theoretical frameworks to understand the meaning of work. Inglehart (Inglehart, 1971; Inglehart and Baker, 2000) developed a theory of post-materialism in European countries where the wealthiest countries are characterised by 'post-materialistic' values. Quality of life and individual well-being become major values. From this perspective, work should enable individuals to fulfil themselves. In European countries, the end of the 20th century could thus be marked by the rise of post-materialistic hopes. Broadly speaking, surveys on values in Europe – the European Values Study (EVS), the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) and the European Social Survey (ESS) – indicate that post-materialistic values, which relativise aspects of material survival, giving more space to personal development, have spread (Davoine and Méda, 2010; Méda and Vendramin, 2010). Theories of happiness draw similar conclusions: good social relations at work and interesting work make wage earners happy on a long-lasting basis (Clark, 2005; Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2000). However, these studies do not

take into account the impact of the very recent financial crisis on the deterioration of socioeconomic security.

Three dimensions of contemporary work can be distinguished: instrumental, social and symbolic. Each dimension is the subject of high and specific expectations and is involved in the assessment of job quality. The instrumental dimension relates to material expectations, such as salary and social security; the social dimension concerns the importance of human relations at work; and the symbolic dimension relates to opportunities for self-development, to the content of work, the feeling of success, autonomy and social usefulness (Nicole-Drancourt and Roulleau-Berger, 2001). Some scholars combine the social and symbolic aspects of work into a single dimension called the 'expressive' dimension (Zoll, 1992).

This expressive dimension has increased in importance in the assessment of work over time, at all ages. In the fifth EWCS, many indicators are relevant for such a perspective. Six have been selected for this analysis because they show variation with age: learning new things, access to training, latitude to change aspects of the job, expression of one's own ideas, social support and career prospects. The hypothesis behind this is that expressive expectations do not decline, even when age increases and when expectations are not met in the same way at all ages.

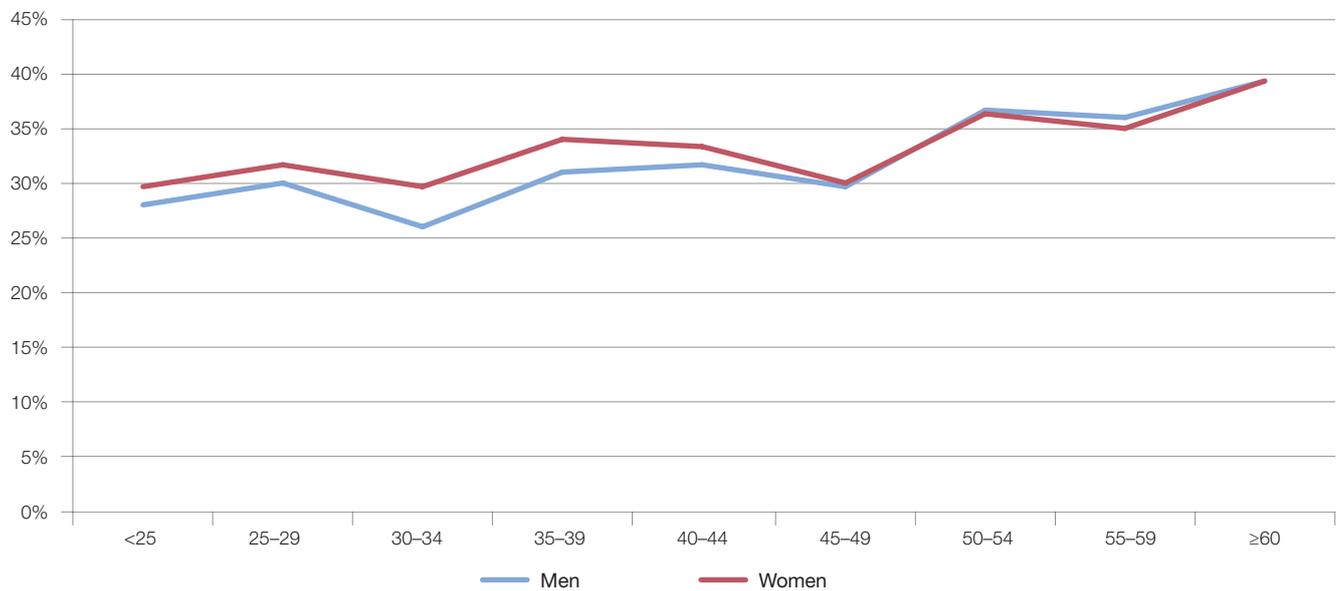
The indicators dealing with learning and training – ‘Does your job involve learning new things?’ (Question 49f) and ‘Did you receive employer-paid training over the past 12 months?’ (Question 61a) – show a downward trend for those aged 50+. This can become a source of dissatisfaction (Green, 2011).

Learning new things at work starts to decrease at the end of the 40s. The percentage of both men and women

who declare that their job does not involve learning new things increases by 10 percentage points from age 50 to 60+ (Figure 14).

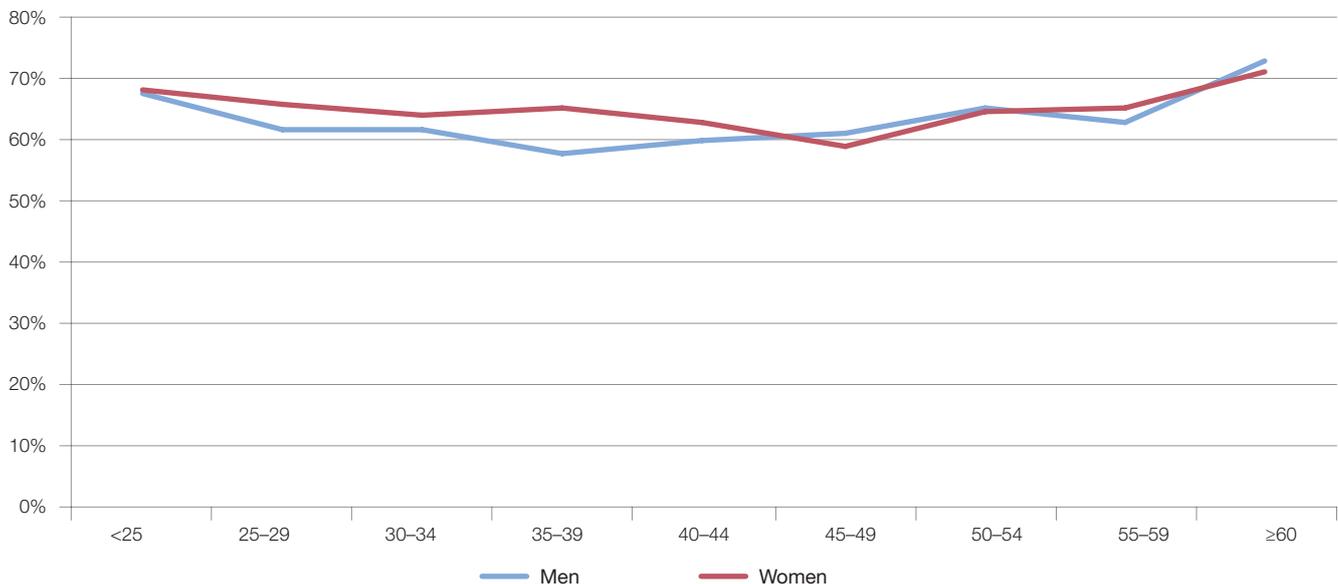
The proportion of those not receiving employer-paid training starts to increase at around 40 years of age for the men, from 57.8% among those aged 35–39 to 72.7% at age 60+. For women, this trend comes later, when they enter their 50s (Figure 15).

Figure 14: Job does not involve learning new things, by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who answered ‘No’ to Q49f.

Figure 15: No access to training, by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who answered ‘No’ to Q61a.

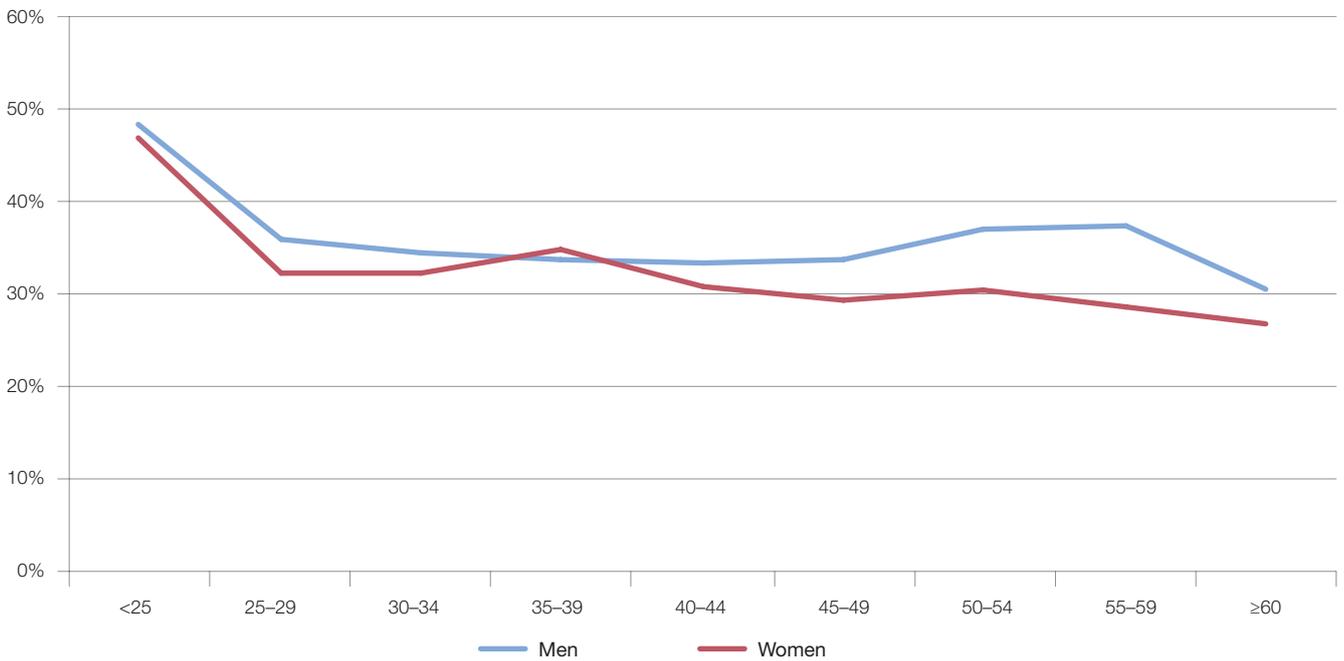
Job latitude (being able to change the order of tasks, work methods and the speed or rate of work) and the capacity to apply one's ideas at work are important in many regards. These play a part in recognition of one's work, which is extremely significant in the assessment of job quality. A lack of recognition may become manifest when workers are relegated to a role of merely carrying out instructions, without benefiting from any autonomy. From this point of view, getting older has a slightly positive effect on work situations (Figures 16 and 17). This is possibly linked to a discrepancy in age structure according to occupational categories.

Research on the expectations that different generations have of work demonstrate that the older generation (over 50) generally asks for the removal of risks in working conditions but also for better recognition of experience. Older workers feel their work experience is undervalued. The value of experience has lost importance in recent years

as a consequence of technological change, at work and also as a value in itself; in its place, the value of innovation has gained more importance in the world of work (Vendramin, 2010).

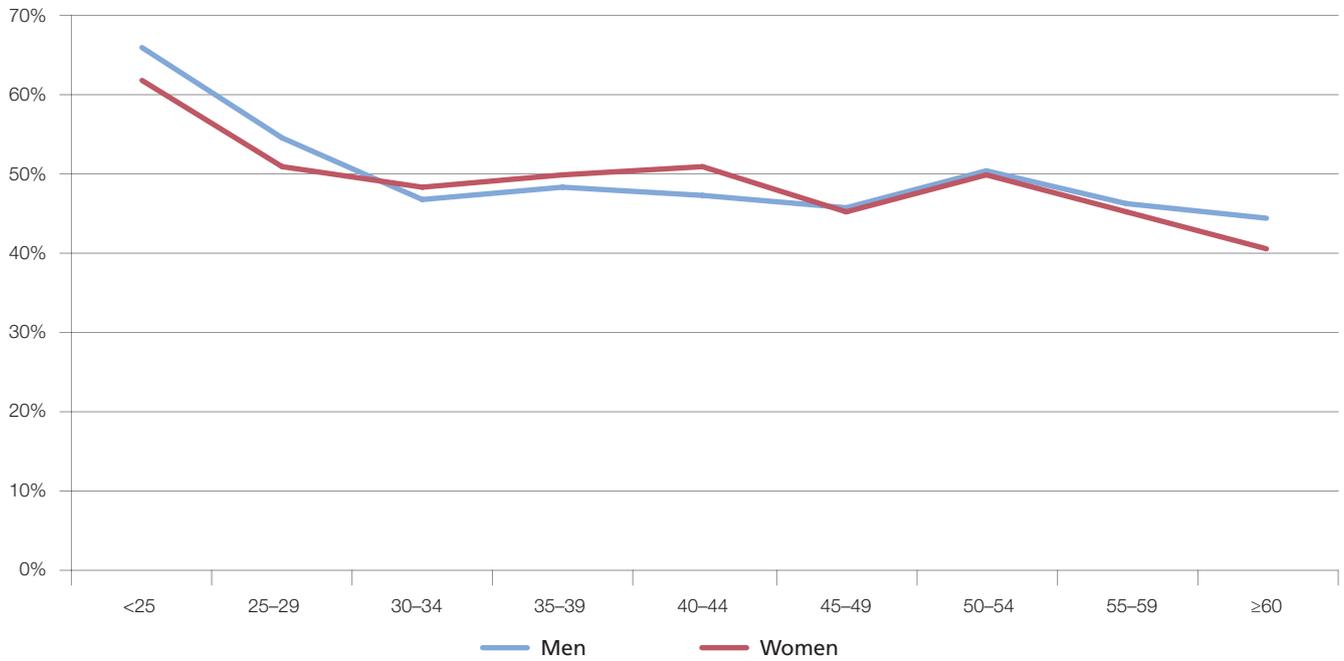
The social component of work is extremely significant for support in daily work but also for social relations developed at work. More than the need to be part of a broad social group that has societal resonance, what seems to be important for workers is the need to be part of a small network of people who meet every day or at least regularly (Davoine and Méda, 2010; Lebrano et al, 2010). The next chapters will show that social support is positively correlated to the assessment of a job and to attitudes about whether workers wish to work longer. Figure 18 uses two indicators to measure social support: support from colleagues and support from managers (Q51a and Q51b). For men over 50, there is an increase in the proportion who declare that support from colleagues and manager is weak.

Figure 16: Weak latitude in work, by age group and gender



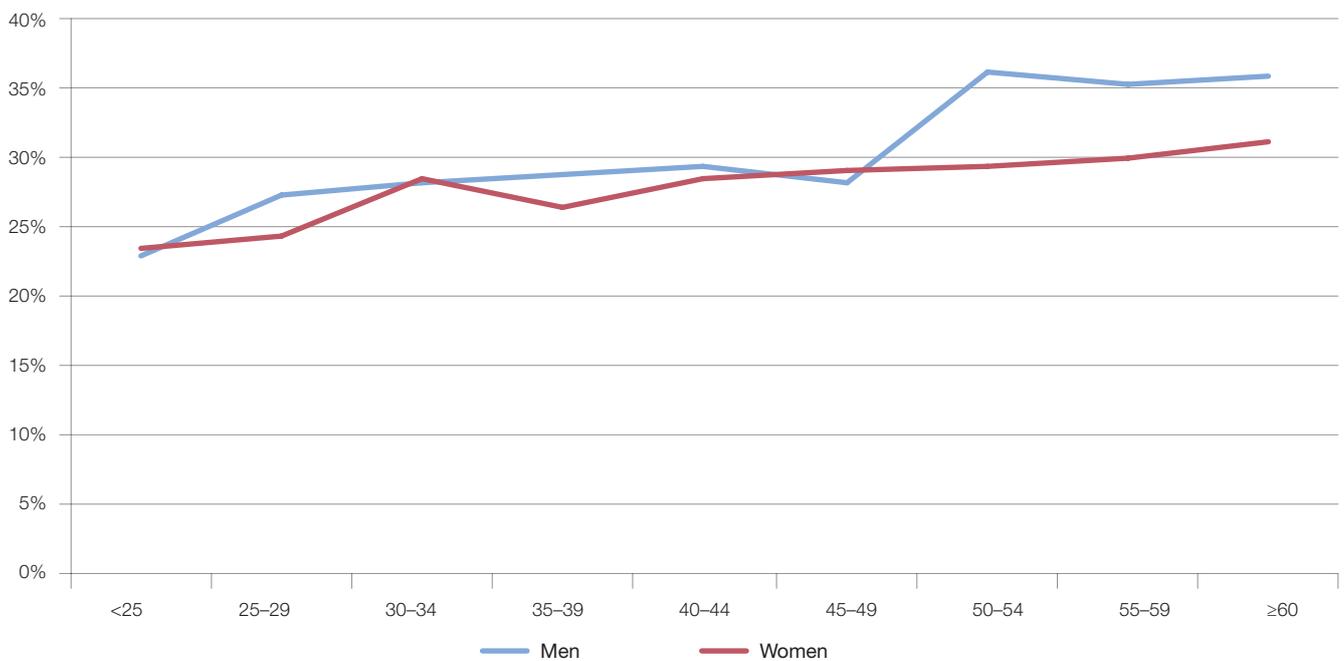
Note: Respondents who answered 'No' to at least two of Q50a, Q50b and Q50c.

Figure 17: Not able to apply own ideas in work, by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who answered 'Sometimes', 'Rarely' or 'Never' to Q51i.

Figure 18: Little social support at work, by age group and gender



Note: Based on Q51a and Q51b; social support assessed as weak if added scores ≥ 6 .

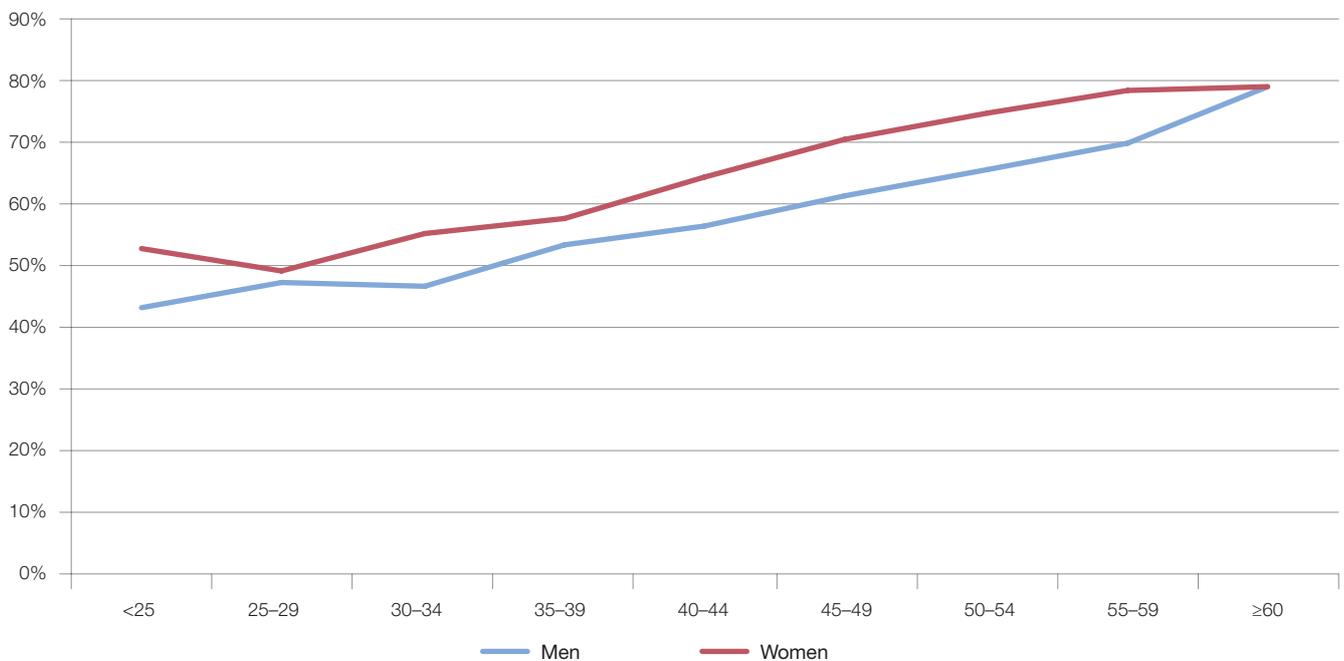
When they enter their 40s, 64% of women and 56% of men declare that they have no good prospects for career advancement; when they enter their 50s, this has risen to 75% and 66% respectively (Figure 19). It is obvious that some jobs have flat horizons, for example in education for most teachers. Research shows that workers are increasingly aware that they will have to work longer than the preceding generation without having the opportunity to benefit from early retirement schemes (Vendramin, 2010), yet, simultaneously, when age increases, chances for occupational advancement become lower. As a result, the prospect of having to work in the same position for many years increases. Poor occupational prospects damage the expectations of middle-aged generations (Richter, 2010). The prime age generation (from ages 30 to 50) seeks social and company support to help reconcile work and family life more effectively, but also, looking to the future, seeks lifelong learning measures (Ponzellini, 2010).

Socioeconomic conditions

The overview report of the fifth EWCS highlights the difficulty in assessing workers' financial security or vulnerability, although socioeconomic conditions (wage levels, pay components, income security and distribution of income within households) are significant components of the overall quality of work (Eurofound, 2012a, pp. 104–114).

In a lifelong perspective, socioeconomic conditions must be considered as a component of work sustainability. As mentioned by several institutional reports, individual decisions to leave or to stay in employment are influenced by a series of financial and institutional factors. These include the legal conditions of access to retirement, the amount of pension earnings in comparison with wage level, and the taxation system at individual or household level. The EWCS survey is obviously not designed to consider these factors. However, the strength of the EWCS is to focus on factors affecting socioeconomic conditions, such as the work contract (indefinite or not, part-time or full-time), seniority in the current organisation, and feelings of job insecurity. These indicators have an influence on health and well-being (discussed in Chapter 4) and on job sustainability (discussed in Chapter 5).

Figure 19: Poor prospects for career advancement, by age group and gender



Note: Respondents who answered 'Disagree' or 'Strongly disagree' to Q77c.

Fixed-term contracts are less frequent among older than younger workers. However, among workers over 50, about 10% of men and 15% of women do not have indefinite contracts, and this ratio increases by up to 20% among workers over 60.

Part-time work affects socioeconomic conditions in terms of income and has further impacts on pension level. Part-time workers are mainly women. Among workers aged 55–59, about 40% of women and 10% of men work part-time, which represents a slight increase in comparison with workers in the 50–54 age bracket; among workers aged 60–64, the proportion of part-time workers increases sharply, to reach 60% of women and 30% of men. Depending on national labour regulations, part-time work can be, for older workers, a way to make their job more sustainable at the end of the career.

Another indicator of a worker's socioeconomic situation is seniority in their organisation. Not all older workers have high seniority in the organisation where they are currently working, and the seniority patterns of women and men aged 50 years and over are different, as shown in Figure 20.

A quarter of workers aged over 50 (23% of men and 25% of women) have low seniority (less than 5 years) in their current organisation. Lengthy seniority (greater than 20 years) is more frequent among men (40%) than women (29%). Seniority often means more favourable opportunities to get recognition or career advancement. Short seniority among workers aged over 50 suggests that they have changed job in recent years. As Figure 20 illustrates, the seniority of 44% of women and 38% of men aged 50 and over is less than 10 years, which means either a job change in their career at some point between their 40s and 50s, or a (re)-entry in the labour market.

Two EWCS questions can be used to assess job insecurity: 'How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? ... I might lose my job in the next 6 months' (Q77a); '... If I were to lose or quit my current job, it would be easy for me to find a job of similar salary' (Q77f). Q77a reflects insecurity in the job itself, while Q77f reflects insecurity in the labour market. From the answers to these questions, one can build a composite indicator of job insecurity. Those who feel insecure are then the ones who agree or strongly agree that they might lose their job soon, and who simultaneously disagree or strongly disagree that they could easily find another convenient job. Figure 21 shows the results in this indicator of job insecurity according to age.

Figure 20: Seniority of workers aged 50+ in their current organisation, by gender

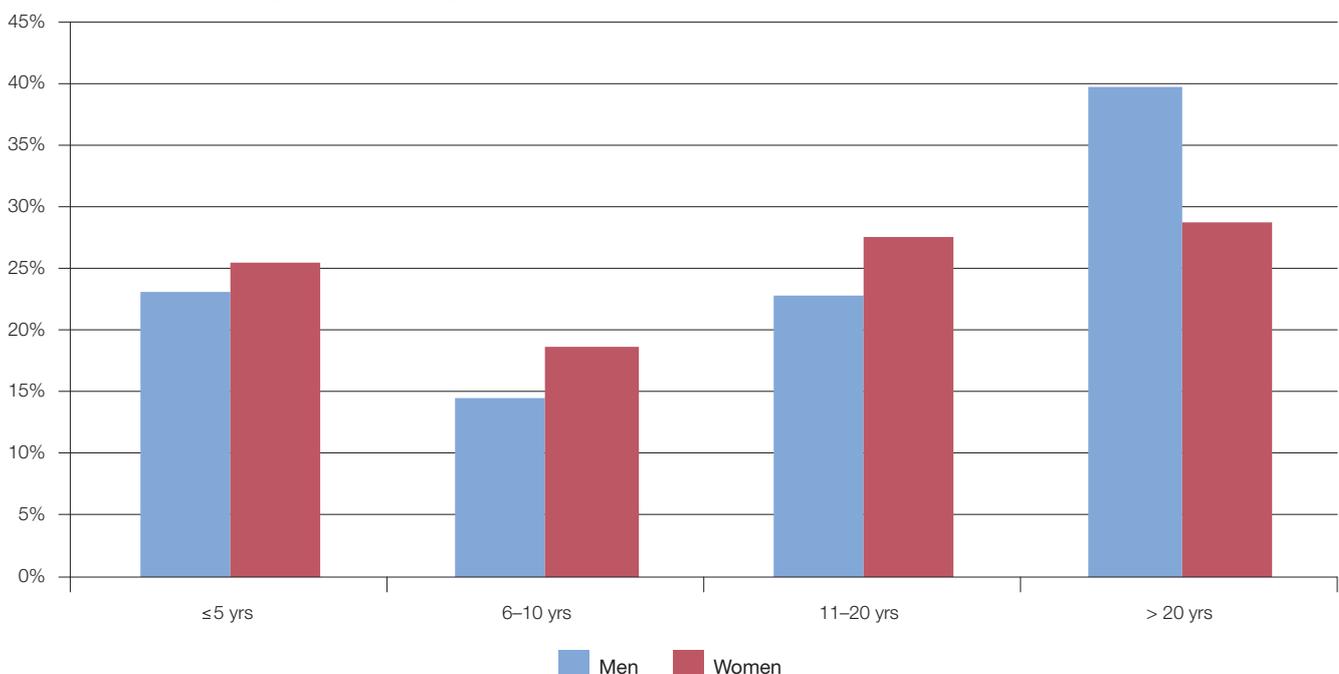
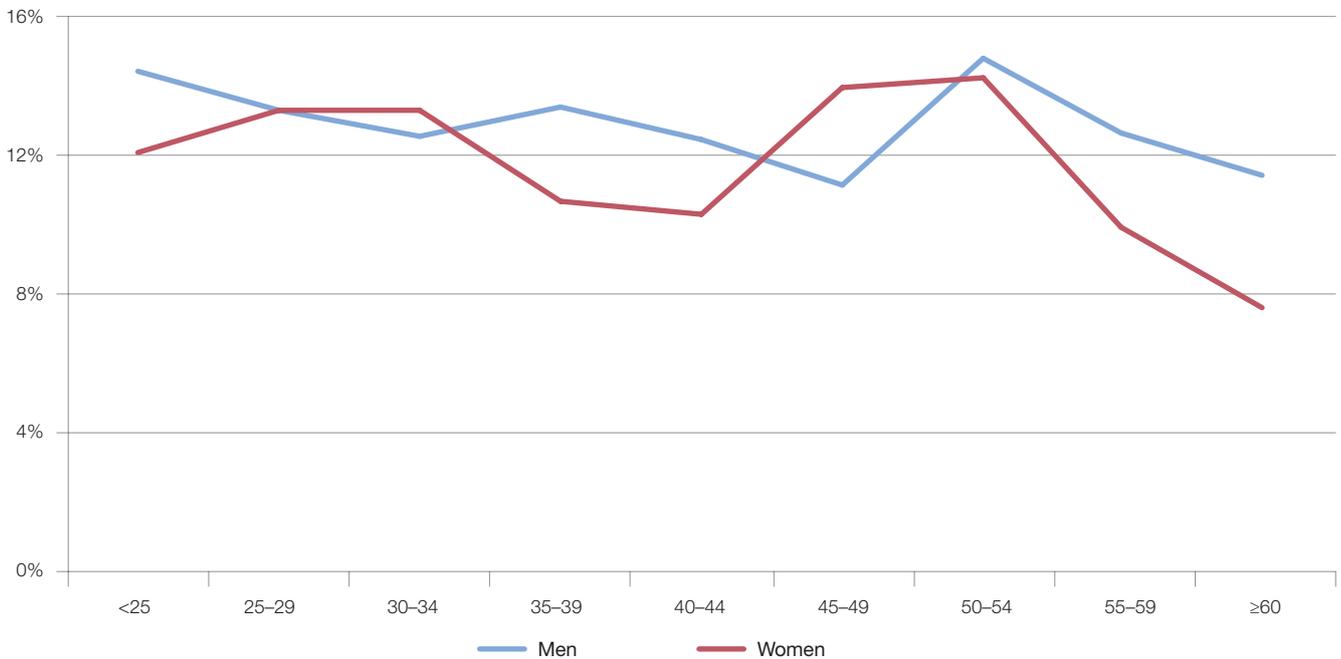


Figure 21: Workers who feel their job is insecure, by age group and gender

There is an increase in feelings of insecurity among women between the 40–44 and 45–49 age brackets, and between the 45–49 and 50–54 age brackets for men. Later on, from 50–54 to 60+, the feeling of insecurity decreases for both men and women, but more strongly for women.

A multidimensional approach

The relations between age and various characteristics of work situations have so far been examined one by one. But these elements actually combine for each employee at a given moment of their working life. It is therefore fruitful to examine all these characteristics together and to see how they combine, because some of them are frequently linked, whereas others do not usually occur simultaneously.

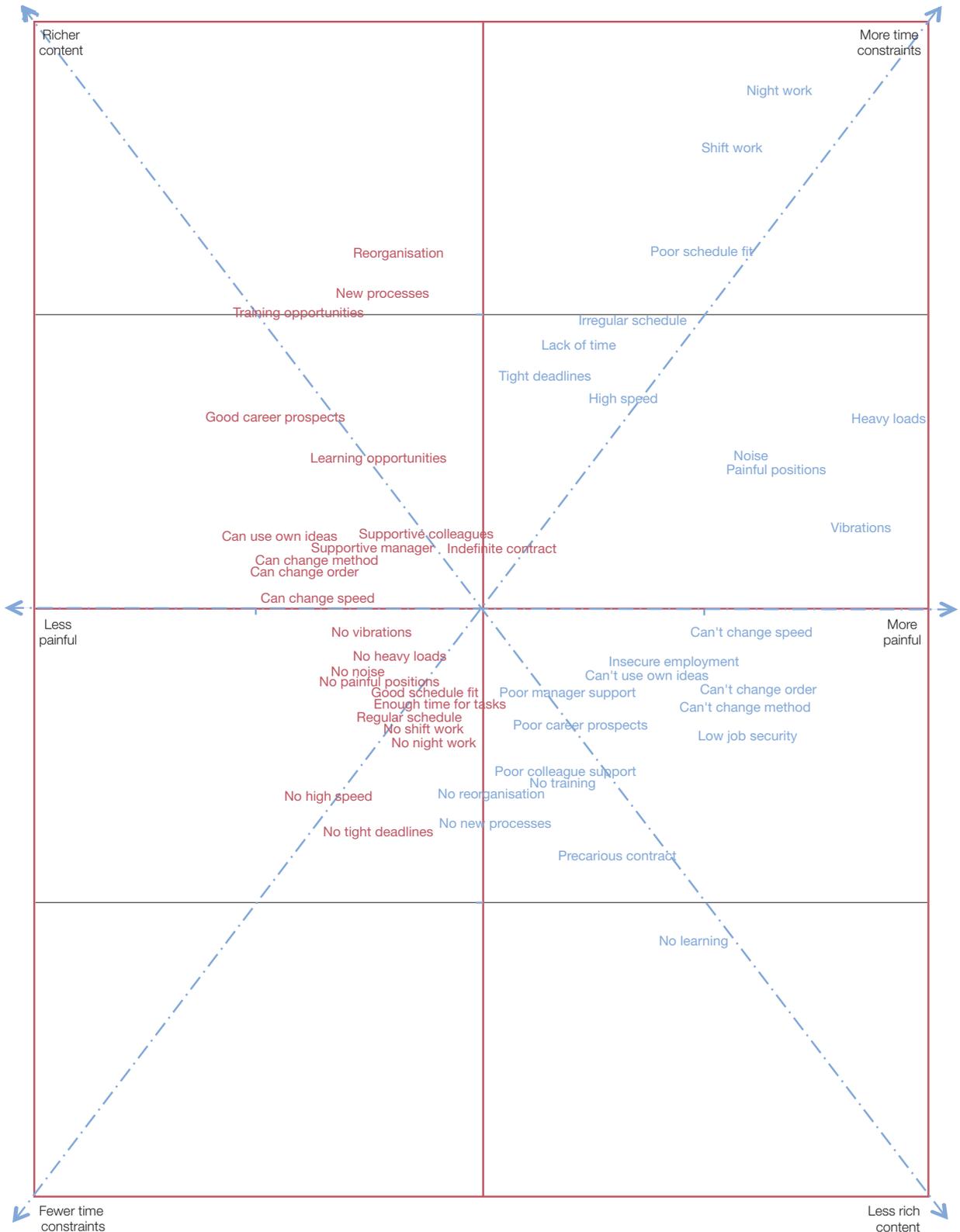
For this purpose, a multiple correspondence analysis has been built that includes as ‘active’ variables all the variables examined in this chapter so far. This type of analysis allows

the drawing of graphs (that can be called ‘landscapes’) in which answer categories are more likely to appear next to each other when they often appear often together in the studied population. They are more likely to appear distant from each other if this co-occurrence is rare.

The position of the variables in the various areas of the graph indicates the specific interpretation that should be made of the chart’s axes. One may also identify ‘poles’ on the graph; that is to say some types of situations characterised by the presence of a combination of modalities are found in certain areas. In this study, for example, these poles will be called ‘More painful’, ‘Less rich content’, and so on, according to the modalities that appear in this area.

The main results of the multiple correspondence analysis are summed up in Figure 22. Some variables are ‘active’ variables; these are used in the calculations used to build the axes of the graph and design the landscape. In this study, active variables are the characteristics of work situations (a detailed list is available in Annex 3).

Figure 22: Characteristics of work situations



Note: For the full distribution of variables used in the multiple correspondence analysis, consult Figure A1 in Annex 3.

Several aspects of job latitude, such as the lack of freedom to change speed, order or method when dealing with tasks, appear near to each other in the ‘eastern’ side or right of the figure. Opposite modalities are found in the ‘western’ or left area. More or less the same opposition can be found for variables related to the strenuousness of the job: painful positions, noise, carrying heavy loads, and vibrations also appear in the eastern area, a little higher than the job latitude variables. These placements of variables suggest that the coordinates on the horizontal axis indicate whether a job is more or less painful.

Two other dimensions also appear linked to, and different from, the west/east dimension. On a south-west/north-east line, one finds variables that are related to schedules and time constraints. Night work, shift work, bad fit of schedules with personal life, and also tight deadlines, high speed, and lack of time when doing a task all appear in the north-east area. At right angles to this line, a south-east/north-west line leads from jobs with poor content: no training, no learning on the job, low support from colleagues or managers, no reorganisation or new processes. On the opposite side of the chart are contrasting characteristics that indicate jobs with richer content. In the same areas, one also finds variables that deal with job security: low security and precarious contracts appear in the south-east.

It is also possible to examine the positions of several ‘supplementary’ variables on the graph. These variables are not inserted in the initial calculations, but they appear on a graph already drawn and help to interpret the initial graph, and to indicate new relationships.

Occupational categories were plotted on a figure not inserted in this report. Not surprisingly, they were distributed along a south-east/north-west range, from low-skilled or manual workers (in the neighbourhood of weak latitude and poor content) on one side, to managers on the opposite side. Other variables such as country, health disorders, or perceived sustainability of work will be examined in the next chapters.

Figure 23 considers age and gender as supplementary variables. In this figure, each marker represents a five-year age bracket, for women (‘W...’) or men (‘M...’).

As a whole, women appear more towards the west of the graph than men. This suggests that women are somewhat less directly exposed, overall, to physically strenuous tasks, night schedules and high speed – all these variables being situated in the east or north-east of the figure.

The differences between age groups seem to be quite similar among men and women. Those under 25, whether male or female, are positioned more to the south-east

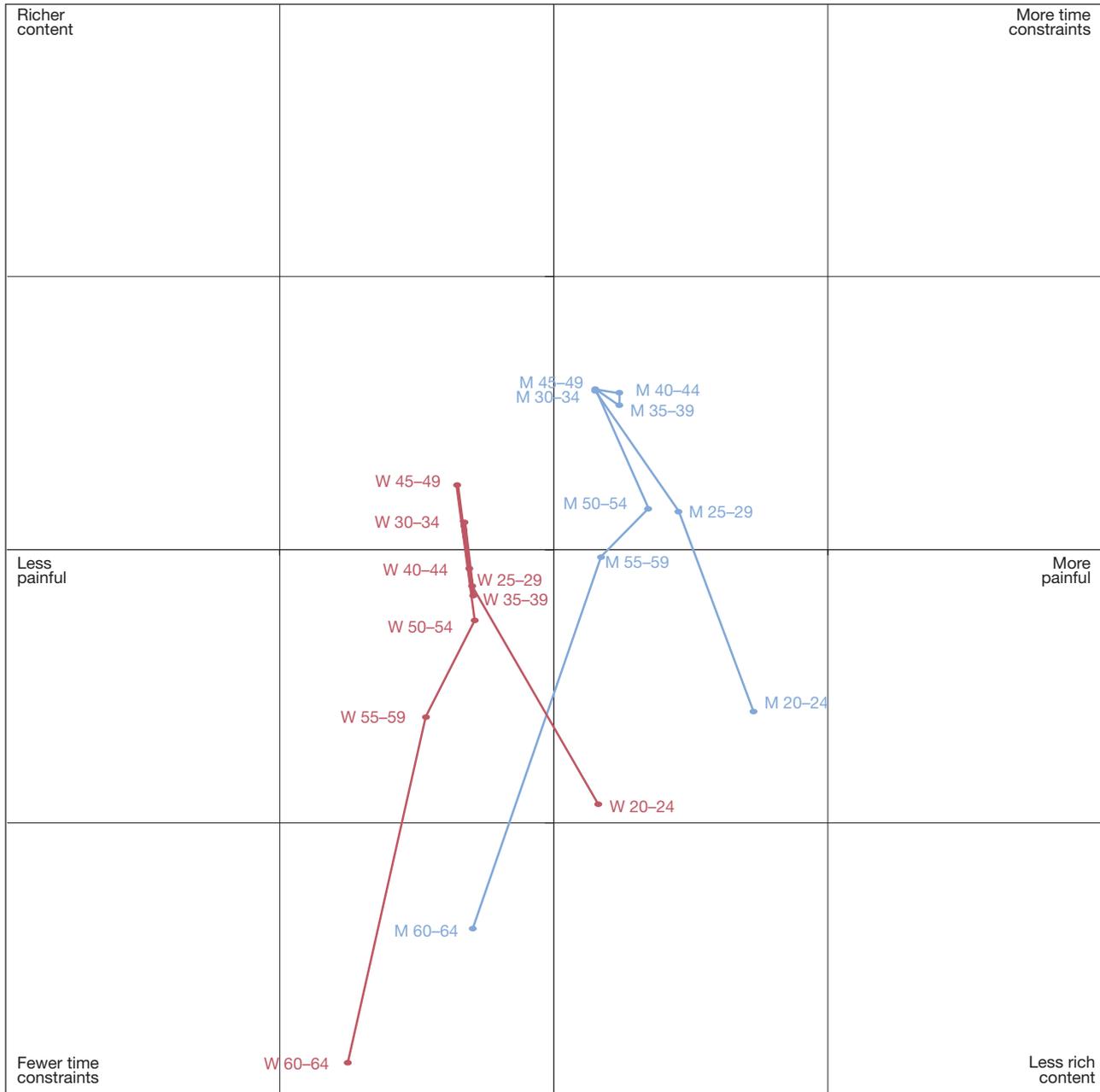
than other age groups. It is likely that poor job content and job insecurity are more frequent for them. Thereafter, all age groups from 25 to 54 are placed rather close to each other, with no clear trend with increase in age, with men in a slightly ‘northern’ position and women slightly more ‘western’. This could mean that the differences in working conditions between age groups 15 years before or after the age of 40 are not very significant overall. Cross-tabulations tend to confirm this.

The significant result is that a clear age effect appears from 55 onwards, and much more so after 60. The two lines (for men and women) starting from the 50–54-years-old markers towards the 55–59 and 60+ markers move towards the south-west. This means that employees in these age categories, men and women, seem to be less and less concerned by time constraints and by problems of schedules, as well as by physical arduousness.

If, in Figure 23, line segments are traced for men and for women, linking the points step by step from 20–24 to 25–29, and so forth, until 60–64, then two angled lines (or ‘curves’) of similar shape appear, although in different positions. These curves represent the evolution of working conditions of men and women throughout their lifetime, considering the dimensions identified by the exercise presented in Figure 22. Both curves move in a north-westerly direction from 20–24 years to 30–34 years (more rich content, less painful). Between 30–34 and 45–49 years, the points are very close together in the centre of the graph (westwards for women, eastwards for men). From 50–54 to 60–64, both curves go in a south-westerly direction (fewer time constraints, less painful).

To prevent misinterpretations of these findings, a ‘deficit model’ of ageing must be avoided, in which ageing is considered to result in a natural and progressive loss of abilities. The ageing process can be analysed as a combination of decline of some functions (decline statistically linked to age, though not at all systematic), and of development of new resources provided by experience. A man or a woman at work is not a passive spectator of his or her own ageing. As one function begins to decline (Welford, 1985), as one begins acquiring experience with the difficulties encountered in specific situations (Salthouse, 1990), and as the skills developed over time offer a wider variety of operating modes, workers learn to compromise between the requirements of the task and their actual capacities. This is reflected in their gestures (Gaudart, 2000), the way they prepare for a job and their cooperativeness. Certain strategies will allow workers to anticipate and devote less time to a specific task or avoid having to act urgently or, at least, be prepared as best as possible to face emergencies. However, the ability of workers to implement these strategies and, consequently, their chances of succeeding will depend on the organisation of work.

Figure 23: Characteristics of work situations, by gender and age group



Data from the fifth EWCS do not allow longitudinal analyses, and all the respondents in the sample are at work. Therefore, these data do not give direct information about exclusion mechanisms. Nevertheless the results from Figures 22 and 23 suggest that physical or schedule constraints together contribute to encourage some workers over 55 to withdraw from work.

The underlying patterns detected in the EWCS dataset through the multiple correspondence analysis also allowed the identification of several other significant features of work situations, which will be used (as independent variables) in a multivariate regression model in Chapters 4 and 5 to examine their relationship to other variables related to sustainability of work. These variables are:

- ✎ for working conditions: *work schedules* (shift work or night work – Q37c and Q32); *physical strain* (tiring or painful positions – Q24a); and *work intensity* (working with tight deadlines – Q45a);
- ✎ for reconciliation of working and non-working hours: *fit between work and external commitments* (working hours fit in (or not) with family or social commitments outside work – Q41);
- ✎ for the expressive dimension of work: *latitude at work* (ability to change the order of tasks, methods of work, or speed or rate of work – Q50a, Q50b and Q50c); and *social support* (help and support from one's colleagues or manager – Q51a and Q51b);
- ✎ for socioeconomic conditions: *job security* ('I might lose my job in the next six months' – Q77a; 'If I were to lose or quit my current job, it would be easy for me to find a job of similar salary' – Q77f).

Self-employed workers

What about self-employed workers? The purpose of this section is to give a short overview of some key features of the degree of exposure to the same work characteristics for self-employed workers. Some of the eight key characteristics selected for salaried workers are either not relevant for self-employed, or the rate of 'no' answers is very high. Job security (as it has been defined here) does not concern the self-employed. Shift work only concerns a very small minority (4%); social support from colleagues presents a high proportion of 'not applicable' answers (46% of the sample), as a majority of the self-employed work alone; weak social support touches about 20% of the sample but does not vary very much with age. Table 9 presents the results of the five remaining variables.

Table 9: Exposure of self-employed workers to selected work characteristics (%) by age group and gender

	Painful positions, at least 50% of the time		Working at high speed, at least 50% of the time		Weak latitude in work		No good prospects for career development		Difficulty balancing work with private or family life	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
<25 years	37	18	42	30	30	30	35	52	19	7
25–29 years	35	35	39	32	-8	-11	33	44	16	13
30–34 years	41	28	44	38	8	16	26	35	26	16
35–39 years	33	35	51	30	12	-8	33	44	34	20
40–44 years	38	34	49	36	6	11	36	44	32	22
45–49 years	36	44	45	38	12	14	40	53	24	19
50–54 years	39	36	44	33	9	12	45	56	28	18
55–59 years	41	41	39	33	9	17	57	56	24	22
60+ years	37	34	32	26	11	12	56	61	13	10
All	37	35	43	33	11	13	41	49	25	17

As a first general comment, the level of exposure of older workers to these work characteristics is not significantly lower among the self-employed after the age of 50. This means that age neither protects the self-employed, nor 'moves them away' from difficulties in working conditions.

This is particularly apparent for painful positions. The self-employed are slightly more exposed to painful positions than wage earners. Moreover, among the latter, there is a sharp decrease in exposure between 50–54 and 55–59, and an even sharper drop after the age of 60 (Figure 9), while exposure remains higher than the average for self-employed workers aged 50–59.

Working at high speed has a lower profile for the self-employed than for employees, among whom women are mainly affected (Figure 10). For the self-employed, this only decreases after 55.

Weak latitude in work affects half as many of the self-employed as it does salaried workers (more than 30% of employees at all ages, against less than 15% of the

self-employed; Figure 16). Here women are slightly disadvantaged when compared to men.

Career advancement does not have the same meaning for all self-employed workers. For some of them (for instance, professionals), career advancement might have the same meaning as for salaried workers. For others, it might relate to progression or business development in the occupation (for instance, in agriculture, craft work or catering). However, at all ages the scores are weaker for 'no good prospects for career advancement' for the self-employed than for employees. As for employees, scores increase with age and women's prospects are worse than men's.

Difficulties in reconciling work and private life are more frequent among men – particularly for those aged 35–44 – than women. The proportion of self-employed confronted with work–life balance difficulties remains high in the 45–59 years age bracket for more than 25% of men and about 20% of women, only decreasing after 60. Difficulties reconciling work and home life are more frequent among the self-employed than employees.

Health, well-being and **satisfaction**

Health, well-being and satisfaction

Introduction

This chapter examines the impact of work situations on the health and well-being of older workers. It considers how workers feel at work, examining indicators concerning health in general, physical and psychological health, satisfaction with working conditions, and psychological well-being. The chapter presents descriptive data for these indicators and uses a multivariate regression model to examine the causal links between specific characteristics of work (the eight indicators selected on the basis of the multiple correspondence analysis in Chapter 3) and their potential impact on health, well-being and work satisfaction for older workers.

Older workers' health and well-being at work

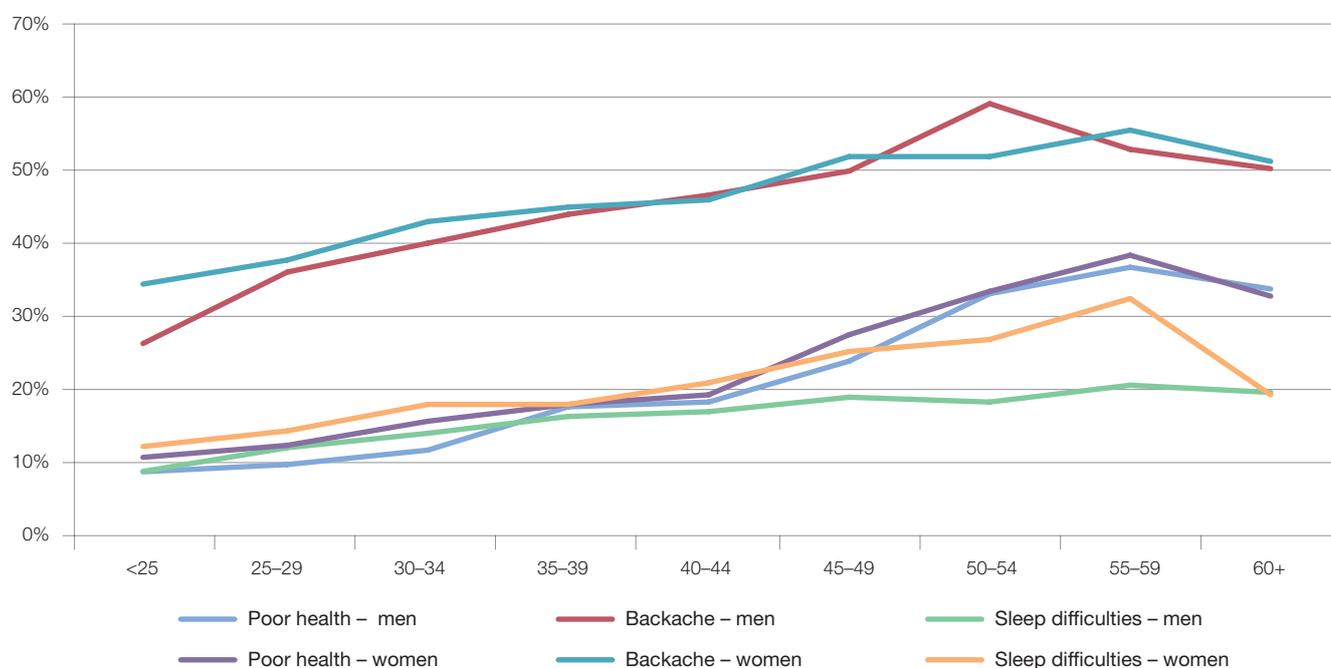
Health evolves with age, not only because of work but also as the result of non-work activities and biological factors (Millanvoye, 1998; Welford, 1985). Nonetheless, working conditions and health are closely linked. Comparative analyses have shown the relationships between organisational models and health (Stansfeld and Candy, 2006; Valeyre, 2006; Lohela et al, 2009). Other research underlines how health inequalities are influenced by the regulation of the working environment (Bambra, 2011). Mental well-being and satisfaction with working conditions are also intertwined with work situations and states of health.

The fifth EWCS provides indicators on workers' health, mental well-being and work satisfaction. Some have

been selected to assess the impact of work situations on workers (see Figure 24): the first indicator concerns self-reported health status; the second (backache) concerns physical health and is well known for its relationship to age and work; the third (sleep difficulties) concerns psychological health and is also linked to both ageing and work pressure.

Q68 from the EWCS provides information on self-reported health. In Figure 24, poor health represents those who do not declare that their health is 'Good' or 'Very good'. Backache and sleep difficulties represent those who answered 'Yes' to Q69c and Q69m ('Over the last 12 months, did you suffer from ...?'). Poor self-reported health has the same profile for men and women. It reaches the highest percentage for those aged 55 to 59, then it starts a downward trend. This does not mean that the health of workers is getting better. It means, rather, that the proportion of those who declare their health is not good decreases, possibly because some of those with health difficulties left the labour market.

Sleep difficulties are more prevalent among women. Among women at the beginning of their 40s, 20.8% report insomnia and sleep difficulties; by the age of 55 this has increased to 32.5%. Artazcoz et al (2001) analyse gender inequalities in health among workers in relation to family demands. Studies carried out in Spain confirm the hypothesis that for workers who are married or cohabiting family demands are related to health status among women but not among men. However, the association is limited to poorly qualified female workers. As for backache, men seem to be more affected: 59.1% report back problems at the beginning of their 50s.

Figure 24: Health problems, by age group and gender

Measuring satisfaction at work is a complex issue that can be controversial among researchers, notably because of its subjective content (Eurofound, 2006d; Sousa-Poza and Sousa-Poza, 2000; Méda, 2010; Pichler and Wallace, 2009). However, job satisfaction is a significant variable because it can be a predictor of the intention or decision of employees to continue or give up their job. In psychology, the person-environment fit theory suggests that older workers are more receptive to retirement when they feel that the degree of fit between their current position, skills and interests has decreased over time. Occupations and organisations have changed dramatically over the last 30 years, and older workers sometimes find themselves in jobs that they no longer find rewarding (Feldman and Beehr, 2011).

Figures 25 and 26 look at the proportions of respondents dissatisfied with their working conditions by occupation and age for men and women separately, for those aged over 40. Unsurprisingly, for both sexes dissatisfaction with working conditions is more widespread in low-skilled

occupations. The higher proportion for men is at the end of their 40s, with 27.4% dissatisfied, whereas for women it is at the beginning of their 50s, with 30.8%. For these women, the trend is similar in mid-skilled manual occupations. Also for women in the three other occupational groups (professionals and managers; technicians and associate professionals; and mid-skilled service workers), a higher proportion of dissatisfied respondents are in their mid-40s. For men in these occupations, this higher reporting of dissatisfaction seems to come five years later.

Responses that workers give to the question on job satisfaction convey important information about their lives at work, but 'data on job satisfaction is not the end of the story as far as worker well-being is concerned' (Budd and Spencer, 2011, p. 17). This is partly due to the fact that self-reported satisfaction is affected by workers' expectations and aspirations. Measuring well-being at work is complex because it should embrace both subjective and objective dimensions.

Figure 25: Dissatisfaction with working conditions, by age group and occupation, men

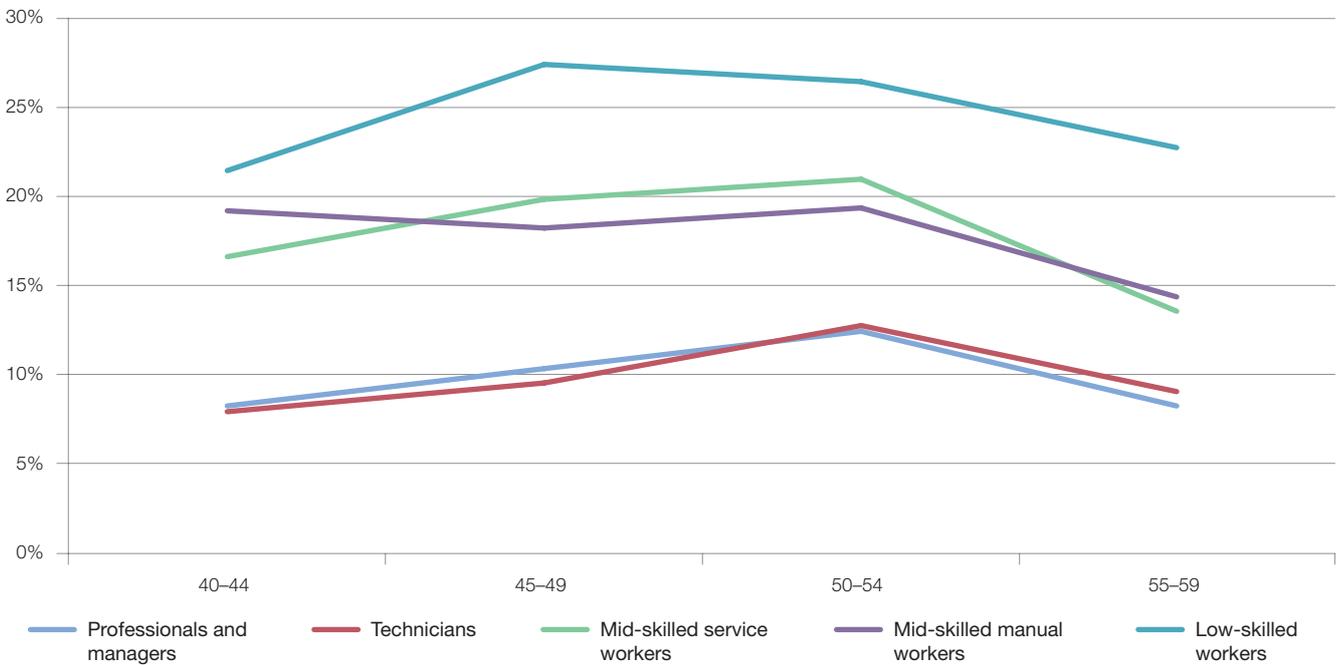
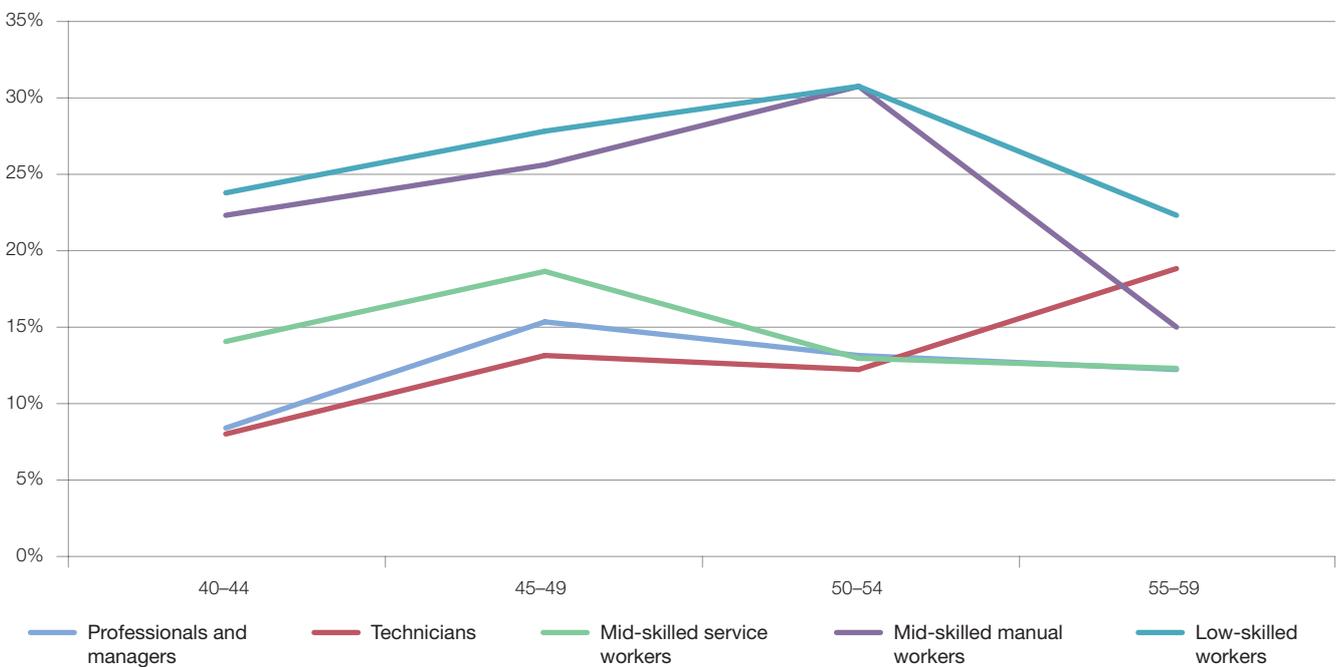


Figure 26: Dissatisfaction with working conditions, by age group and occupation, women



The fifth EWCS includes an indicator of psychological well-being (WHO-5 Well-Being Index), which is just one aspect of well-being potentially related to work situations. However, it is interesting to analyse some variations. For men (Figure 27), two occupational groups (professionals and managers, and mid-skilled service workers) show a peak in the proportion experiencing low well-being in their mid-40s before a downward trend. For the other occupational groups

the peak comes five years later. For women (Figure 28), technicians and associate professionals show a rising trend from 40 years old to the end of their 50s, with an increase of 16 percentage points (from 14.4% to 30.6%) between 40 and 59. For mid-skilled workers, and for professionals and managers, the peak in the proportion experiencing low well-being is at the beginning of the 50s and for the last two remaining groups, the peak is five years earlier.

Figure 27: Low well-being, by age group and occupation, men

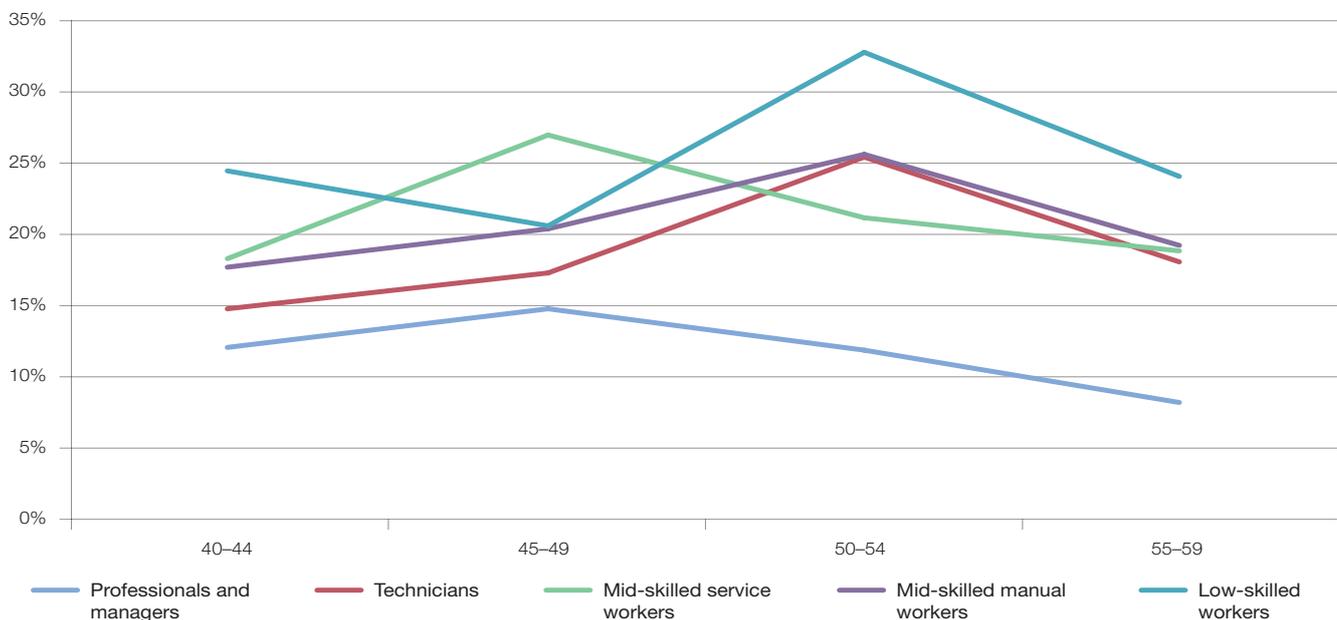
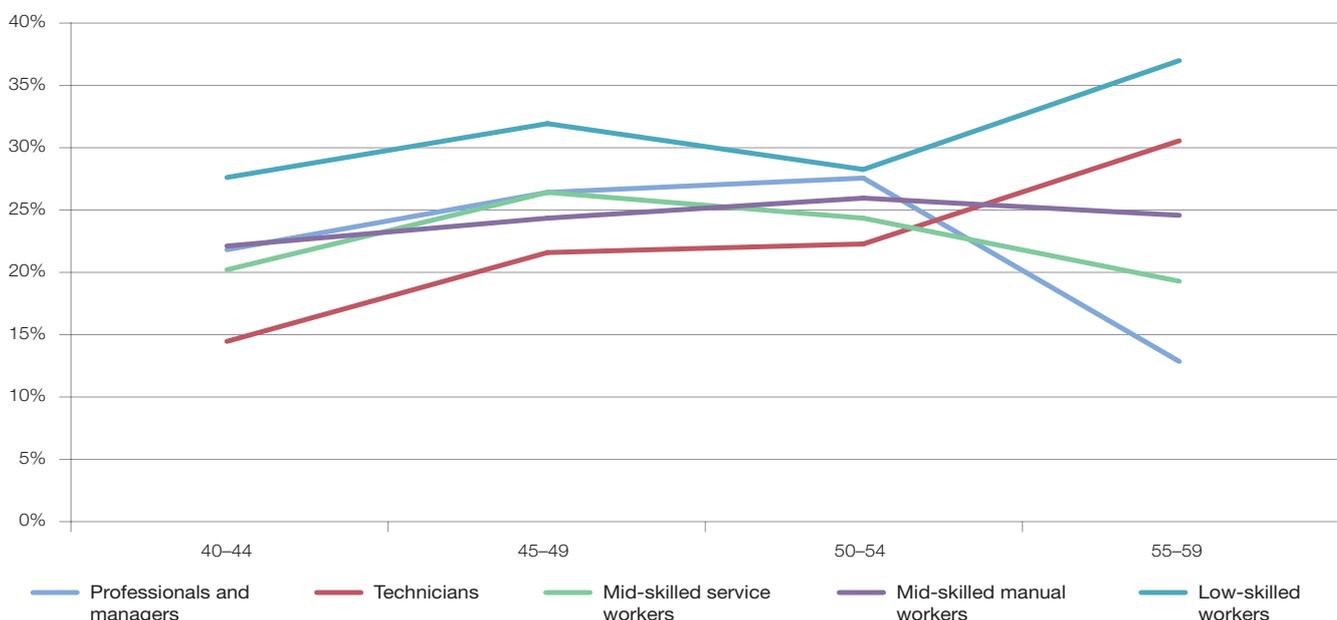


Figure 28: Low well-being, by age group and occupation, women



Linking older workers' health, work satisfaction and work characteristics

To examine the sustainability of work, the aspects of work that could have an effect on older workers' health and well-being need to be identified. 'Have an effect' is a rough shorthand as the EWCS provides transversal data that does not favour causal inferences. Therefore, correlations can only be interpreted as reflecting, at least partly, causal links, according to scientific literature on the relationships between age, work and health, as already mentioned in Chapter 3. This can be done by means of a multivariate regression model (Logit model). Several important features of work situations, chosen having examined the results of the multiple correspondence analysis in Chapter 3, are examined in this analysis to see the effect they have on how workers evaluate their health. These include shift work or night work; working hours that do not fit well with personal life; tiring or painful positions (representing here physical strains as a whole); working with tight deadlines; low level of social support; low level of job latitude; job insecurity; and absence of prospects for career advancement.

Differences between age groups are examined too, because even in the 50–59 age category, for example, there may be a difference in health status between the younger and older workers in this group. Finally, workers' ISCO occupational category is examined to isolate the effects of working conditions by themselves, without having to take into account income or living conditions, which could be linked to both work and health. It must be emphasised that working conditions and occupation effects will usually multiply, for example in the case of low-skilled blue-collar workers.

Each analysis is carried out separately for men and women because sociological research has highlighted that work context and careers, and their consequences for work satisfaction and health, may differ for men and women.

Table 10 shows one of the main results of this analysis, presenting the factors that affect the respondents' opinion about their state of health, for employees aged 50–59. In the table, the reference group is shown in brackets. For example, in relation to age, workers aged 50–54 are in the reference group and workers aged 55–59 are compared with this group.

Table 10: Factors explaining poor self-reported health in workers aged 50–59

	Men (OR)	Women (OR)
55–59 (vs. 50–54)	1.29	1.31
Technicians (vs. managers and professionals)	1.21	1.01
Mid-skilled service workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.80	1.15
Mid-skilled manual workers (vs. managers and professionals)	2.00	1.36
Low-skilled workers (vs. managers and professionals)	2.14	1.68
Shift work or night work (≥ 5 nights a month) (vs. no)	1.07	0.86
Working hours do not fit well (vs. do fit well)	1.64	2.19
Tiring or painful positions at least half the time - yes (vs. no)	1.73	2.14
Work with tight deadlines at least half of the time – yes (vs. no)	1.14	1.24
Support weak (vs. support not weak)	1.44	1.09
Latitude weak (vs. latitude not weak)	1.06	1.11
Job insecurity – yes (vs. no)	1.64	1.12
No prospects for career advancement – no (vs. yes)	1.41	1.28

Note: OR = odd ratios; reference group shown in brackets; for a guide to reading odds ratios, see the note at the start of Chapter 3.

Unsurprisingly, self-evaluated health is linked to age. Workers aged 55–59 years are 1.3 times more likely to report their health as poor than workers aged 50–54. Health perception is also related to occupational category: manual and low-skilled older workers are more likely than managers and professionals to report poor health. In addition, several aspects of the work situation also play an important part in workers' assessment of their health, both for men and women, including inadequate working hours, painful positions, and absence of prospects for career development. Low social support and job insecurity also appear to have significant negative effects, but for men mainly. For women these results are not as well established.

From this starting point, three supplementary issues appear. First, are these relationships specific to the population aged 50–59 years, or does one find more or less the same links for middle-aged workers (40–49 years)? Second, do the same links appear for any kind of health trouble, or do they depend on the type of trouble? Third, do the same variables play a part not only in health status, but in job satisfaction?

The answer to the first question is positive, as one can see in Table 11.

In the 40–49 years age category, too, poor fit between working and non-working time, painful positions, and the absence of advancement have a significant influence on self-evaluated health for both sexes, together with low social support. The odds ratios are sometimes lower, sometimes higher than for the age group 50–59. Odds ratios for those aged 50 to 59 compared to the younger group are particularly high for women when poor fit of working hours (2.2 vs. 1.5) and painful positions (2.1 vs. 1.8) are involved.

In order to assess the second issue, whether the type of health problem is relevant, and to distinguish between types of health problem, two types of trouble were selected, quite different from one another and both very frequent, backache and sleep difficulties. Using the same model, Table 12 presents the results for employees aged 50 to 59.

Table 11: Factors explaining poor self-reported health in workers aged 40–49

	Men (OR)	Women (OR)
45–49 (vs. 40–44)	1.48	1.45
Technicians (vs. managers and professionals)	1.56	n/s
Mid-skilled service workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.46	n/s
Mid-skilled manual workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.42	1.49
Low-skilled workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.52	n/s
Shift work or night work (≥ 5 nights a month) (vs. no)	1.33	1.26
Working hours do not fit well (vs. do fit well)	1.81	1.54
Tiring or painful positions at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	2.44	1.81
Work with tight deadlines at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	n/s	1.20
Support weak (vs. support not weak)	1.89	1.36
Latitude weak (vs. latitude not weak)	n/s	n/s
Job insecurity – yes (vs. no)	1.67	1.42
No prospects for career advancement – no (vs. yes)	1.94	1.56

Note: OR = odd ratios; n/s = not statistically significant; reference group shown in brackets; for a guide to reading odds ratios, see the note at the start of Chapter 3.

Table 12: Factors explaining backache and sleep difficulties among workers aged 50–59

	Men (OR)		Women (OR)	
	Backache	Sleep difficulties	Backache	Sleep difficulties
55–59 (vs. 50–54)	0.84	1.20	1.22	1.39
Technicians (vs. managers and professionals)	n/s	n/s	1.29	n/s
Mid-skilled service workers (vs. managers and professionals)	n/s	n/s	1.58	0.78
Mid-skilled manual workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.79	0.63	n/s	n/s
Low-skilled workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.53	n/s	1.72	0.66
Shift work or night work (≥ 5 nights a month) (vs. no)	n/s	n/s	n/s	n/s
Working hours do not fit well (vs. do fit well)	1.25	1.79	1.77	1.85
Tiring or painful positions at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	3.01	n/s	3.70	1.80
Work with tight deadlines at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	1.30	1.33	1.19	1.30
Support weak (vs. support not weak)	1.49	1.55	1.31	n/s
Latitude weak (vs. latitude not weak)	n/s	0.67	n/s	n/s
Job insecurity – yes (vs. no)	n/s	1.41	n/s	n/s
No prospects for career advancement – no (vs. yes)	1.41	1.74	1.23	1.23

Note: OR = odd ratio; n/s = not statistically significant; reference group shown in brackets; for a guide to reading odds ratios, see the note at the start of Chapter 3.

Male workers who work in painful positions are three times more likely to complain of backache, while female workers are three-and-a-half times more likely to do so. The strong influence of painful positions on older workers' backache is not unexpected. Backache is well known as a health feature linked to both age and to physical risks (see, for example, De Zwart et al, 1997), and by itself it may reinforce the feeling of arduousness of these constraints. For older women, painful positions also reinforce sleep problems. Other factors influence both backache and sleep troubles, including problematic working hours (which may hamper the possibility of recovery), tight deadlines and the absence of career advancement. Weak social support is linked to backache for both sexes, and to sleep problems for men. A rather surprising result is that, for men, a low level of job latitude appears to be protective in relation to sleep problems. A convincing explanation for this statement eludes the report authors, although it might indicate an ambivalent effect of professional responsibility on some aspects of health.

Finally, the third question is about older workers' job satisfaction. Is it sensitive to the same work characteristics? Table 13 shows that the answer is affirmative.

The questionnaire of the fifth EWCS directly addresses the evaluation of working conditions by the respondents. Therefore it is easy to understand that the 'influence' of working conditions on these answers is so strong as to almost be a tautology and, consequently, the link is strong enough to apparently weaken the effects of occupational category.

Nevertheless, it is notable that the odds ratios differ very much from one item to another. At the top of the list of factors causing dissatisfaction are lack of prospects for career advancement for male employees aged 50 to 59 and poor fit of work schedules with non-working time (for female employees), a distinction that can be explained by sociological knowledge on gender differences in job satisfaction.

Self-employed workers

This section gives a short overview of key features of health, satisfaction and psychological well-being among the self-employed, using the same variables as for employees. For reasons of statistical reliability, age groups of ten years are used, instead of the five-year groups used for employees.

Table 13: Factors explaining unsatisfactory working conditions among workers aged 50–59

	Men (OR)	Women (OR)
55–59 (vs. 50–54)	0.72	n/s
Technicians (vs. managers and professionals)	n/s	n/s
Mid-skilled service workers (vs. managers and professionals)	n/s	0.67
Mid-skilled manual workers (vs. managers and professionals)	n/s	n/s
Low-skilled workers (vs. managers and professionals)	n/s	n/s
Shift work or night work (≥ 5 nights a month) (vs. no)	1.36	n/s
Working hours do not fit well (vs. do fit well)	2.48	4.15
Tiring or painful positions at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	1.98	1.77
Work with tight deadlines at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	1.69	1.67
Support weak (vs. support not weak)	2.60	2.47
Latitude weak (vs. latitude not weak)	1.34	1.51
Job insecurity – yes (vs. no)	2.12	2.03
No prospects for career advancement – no (vs. yes)	3.04	2.41

Note: OR = odd ratios; n/s = not statistically significant; reference group shown in brackets; for a guide to reading odds ratios, see the note at the start of Chapter 3.

Table 14: Health, satisfaction with working conditions, and well-being of self-employed (%) by age group and gender

		< 30 years	30–39 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	60+ years	All
Health not good	Men	10	12	24	34	44	25
	Women	13	16	25	35	51	27
Backache during the past 12 months	Men	35	46	51	57	57	50
	Women	37	47	58	50	63	51
Insomnia or sleep difficulties (past 12 months)	Men	10	14	17	20	15	16
	Women	13	18	22	23	31	21
On the whole, not satisfied with working conditions	Men	17	13	14	19	12	15
	Women	9	12	19	19	12	15
Low psychological well-being (WHO-5 Index)	Men	14	16	20	23	18	19
	Women	16	19	25	24	26	22

The indicators show that older self-employed workers face a situation that is worse than that of their younger counterparts. The proportion of self-employed workers who report that their general health is neither very good nor good clearly increases with age, culminating at 51% among women aged 60 and over. Backache during the past 12 months affects more than 50% of the self-employed after the age of 40 and peaks after the age of 60. Insomnia or sleep difficulties have different profiles for men and women. Among men, such problems increase during their 40s and peak during their 50s, and decrease for the older population; among women, they start increasing earlier and continue to increase after 60.

In comparison with employees, health indicators show a different trend. They reveal a degradation of health among the self-employed aged 60+, while for employees in the same age group, the trend is towards a decrease in the proportion of those having health problems (see Figure 24 above).

The general degree of dissatisfaction with working conditions for the self-employed reaches its highest levels in the 50–59 age group for men, and in the 40–59 age group for women. There is an improvement for respondents aged over 60. The dissatisfaction rates are similar to those of employees.

The WHO index of psychological well-being shows a peak of low well-being among men aged 50–59, whereas among the women there is a higher prevalence of low well-being consistently after the age of 40.

Are these figures sensitive to differences in occupations? As shown in Chapter 2 (Table 6), the distribution of male and female self-employment is concentrated in particular occupational categories: managers and professionals, service and sales workers, skilled agricultural workers, craft and related trades workers. Table 15 indicates the prevalence of variables related to health, job satisfaction and well-being for those aged 40–49 to 50–59 (numbers are too small for workers aged 60+) for a limited set of occupational categories – those who are most represented in self-employment:

- managers and professionals (ISCO 01 and 02 together) – men and women;
- service and sales workers (ISCO 05) – only women;
- skilled agricultural and fishery workers (ISCO 06) – men and women;

- craft and related trades workers (ISCO 07) – only men.

This table highlights the poor health status and low satisfaction of ageing self-employed workers in agriculture and fishery, mainly for women but also for men. However, some indicators show that women between 40–49 and 50–59 face a relatively better situation (sleep difficulties, satisfaction and well-being). As agricultural workers represent more than 20% of all older self-employed, the weight of this occupational group in the overall picture of Table 15 is substantial.

Female and male managers and professionals, who are also a significant subgroup among the ageing self-employed (29% of self-employed aged 50+), present more favourable figures in the age groups 40–49 and 50–59 than the average of all occupational categories. Women in services and sales occupations also present more favourable figures than the average of all occupations, but to a lesser extent than managers and professionals. Men in craft occupations have less favourable scores for general health and backache, but not for the other indicators.

Table 15: Health, satisfaction with working conditions and well-being (%) of self-employed, by age group, according to selected occupational categories

	Health not good		Backache		Sleep difficulties		Low satisfaction		Low well-being	
	40–49 years	50–59 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	40–49 years	50–59 years
Managers and professionals – men	16	23	37	38	18	17	6	10	15	18
Managers and professionals – women	18	15	56	31	28	28	11	14	20	20
Service and sales workers – women	20	33	47	47	13	23	13	14	20	21
Skilled agricultural workers – men	27	47	60	72	12	19	26	43	17	24
Skilled agricultural workers – women	42	58	78	80	30	23	46	32	40	27
Craft workers – men	31	39	62	67	13	22	14	14	30	21
All occupations – men	24	34	51	57	17	20	14	19	20	23
All occupations – women	25	35	58	50	22	23	19	19	25	24

Attitudes to working after age 50

Attitudes to working after age 50

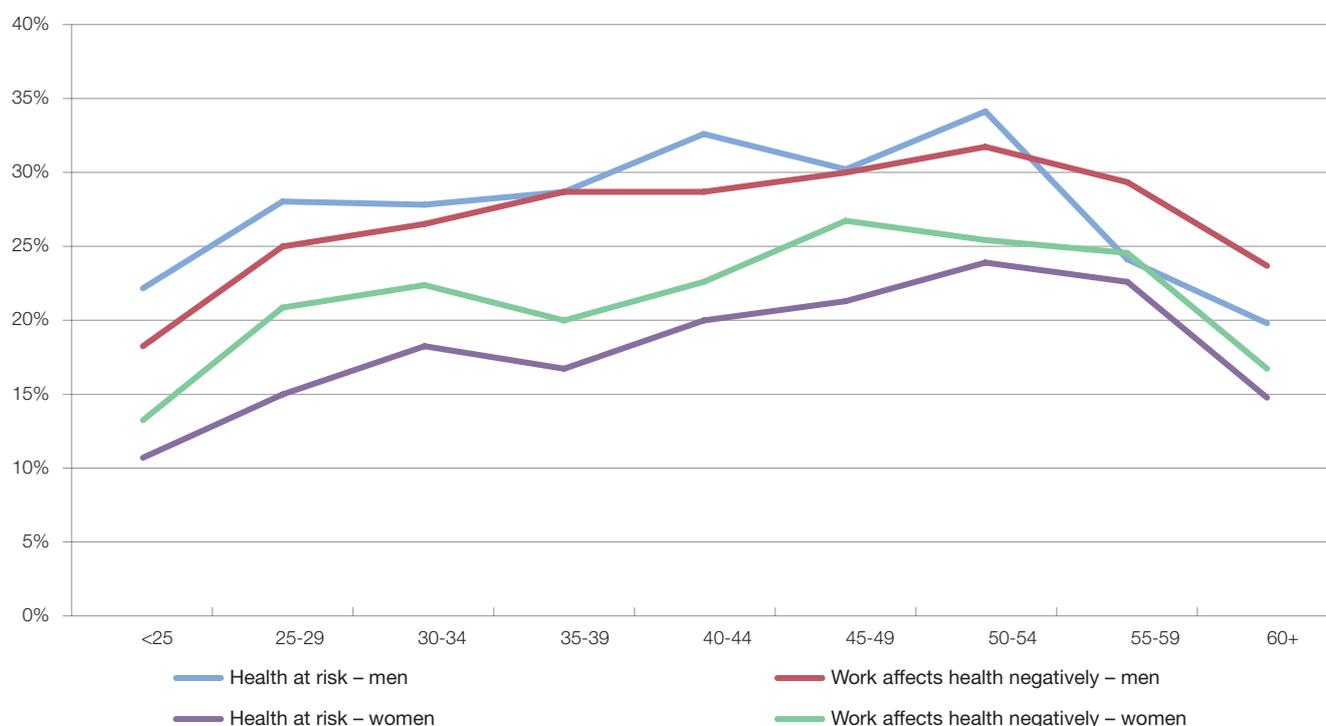
Introduction

This chapter examines the attitudes of older workers towards the sustainability of their work. The consequences and assessment of diverse exposures to specific work situations are considered. The objective is to have some indication of which groups of workers might be more prone to 'exit' behaviours or which work situations may lead to exits. Indicators concerning health and work, ability to work in the same job until the age of 60 and time preferences are examined, and the effect upon them of the eight variables selected based on the multiple correspondence analysis in Chapter 3 is explored. This chapter first presents descriptive data, and then a multivariate regression model assessing the links between these indicators and specific work characteristics. Data on self-employed workers are presented at the end of the chapter.

Job sustainability and perceptions of health and work

The perceived relationship between health and work evolves with age. The percentages of men and women who declare that their health is at risk because of work are highest for the 50 to 54 age group, for both sexes (Figure 29). After this peak, the percentages decrease significantly, by 6 percentage points for women aged 60+ (from 23.8% at 50–54 to 17.4% at 60+) and 14 percentage points for men in the same age group (from 34.2% to 19.8%). Trends are similar for those who consider that work affects their health negatively. A perceived negative relationship between work and health could be a predictor of exit from work (Molinié, 2005).

Among all employees, 28.8% of those aged 50 to 54 and 27.3% of those aged 55 to 59 report that their work negatively affects their health.

Figure 29: Health concerns because of work, by age group and gender

Occupational categories are obviously associated with effects on health (Figures 30 and 31). The most significant change in health concerns for both sexes is among mid-skilled manual workers, where the proportion of workers in unhealthy situations at work decreases considerably after the age of 54. This reflects a need to take up roles that are less dangerous for their health. There is no such visible decrease for other occupations and the positions of men and women can be reversed, for example among technicians and associate professionals.

The proportion of those reporting that their health is at risk and that work affects their health negatively is quite high for women in the managers and professionals category (around 3 out of 10), and this does not really change during their 50s.

The beginning of the 50s is a critical time in a working life since it is a period when preparations are made and decisions are taken regarding professional mobility, as well as potential early retirement (Molinié, 2005; Gaillard

and Desmette, 2010). Overall, 33.7% of workers aged 50 to 54 say they do not think they will be able to do the same job at the age of 60. This percentage takes into account all those who answered 'No, I don't think so' and 'I wouldn't want to' to Q75 – 'Do you think you will be able to do the same job you are doing now when you are 60 years old?' Figure 32 shows the percentages of workers in different occupations answering in this fashion. For some occupations, the percentages are very high, particularly among women, 55.4% of whom working in mid-skilled manual occupations, and 54.3% in low-skilled jobs do not think they will be able to do the same job when they reach the age of 60. For the equivalent occupational categories for men, the percentages are 39.4% and 40.7% respectively.

For both sexes, slightly more than one out of three mid-skilled service workers also say that they will not be able to do the same job until the end of their 50s. The proportion of women in professional and managerial occupations who also believe this is significant (29.5%).

Figure 30: Health or safety is at risk because of work, by occupation, age group and gender

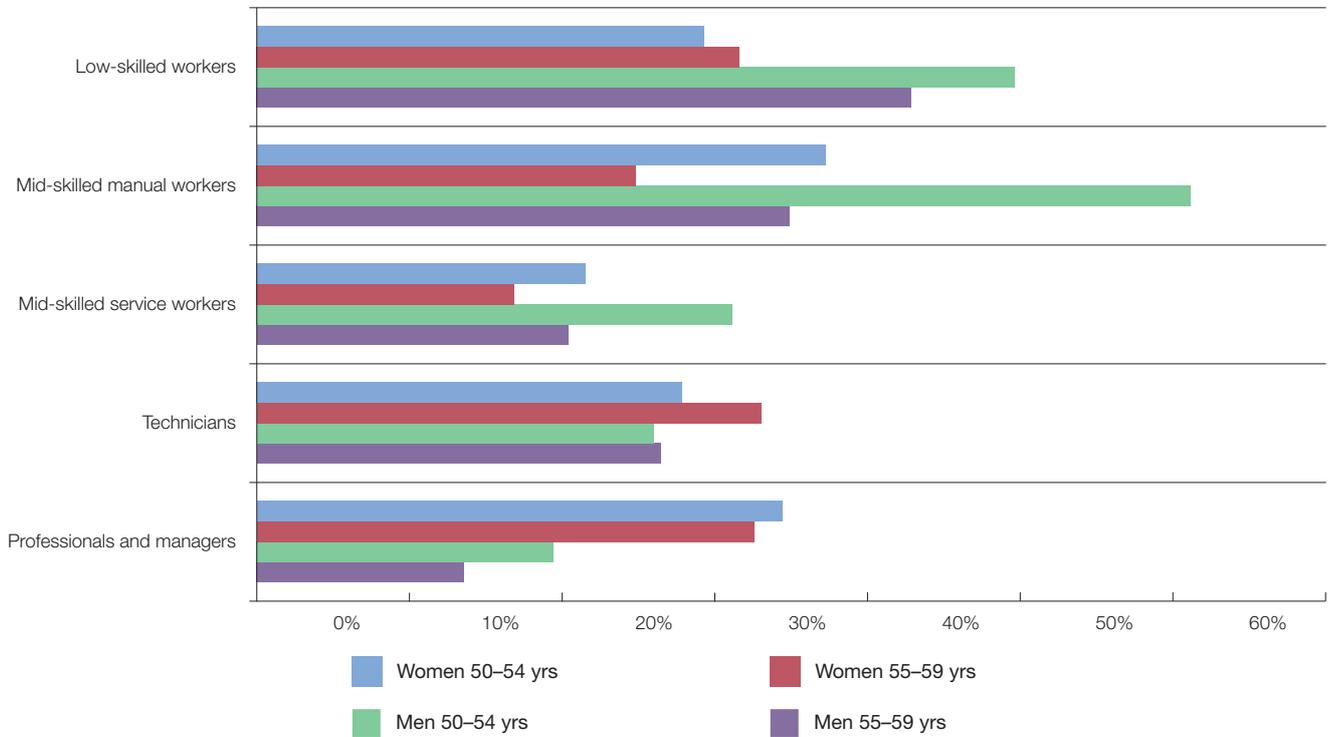


Figure 31: Work affects health negatively, by occupation, age group and gender

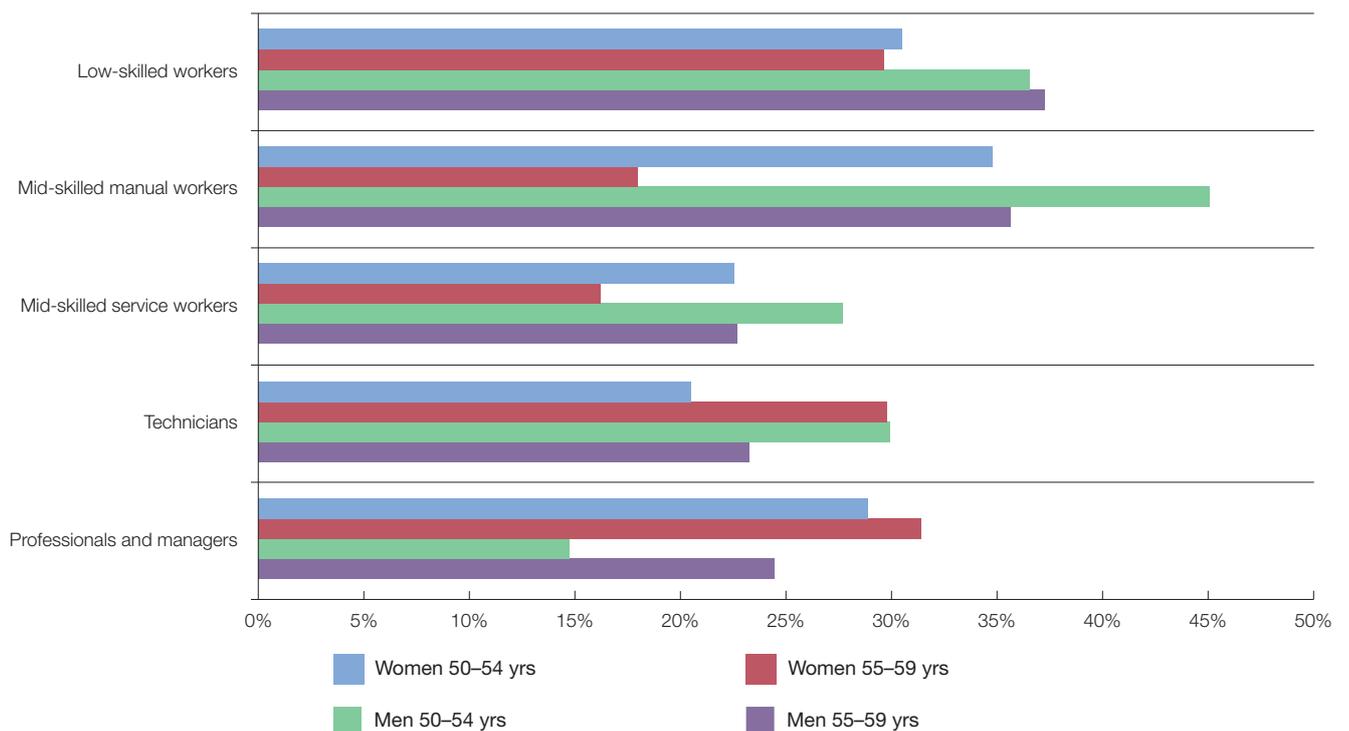
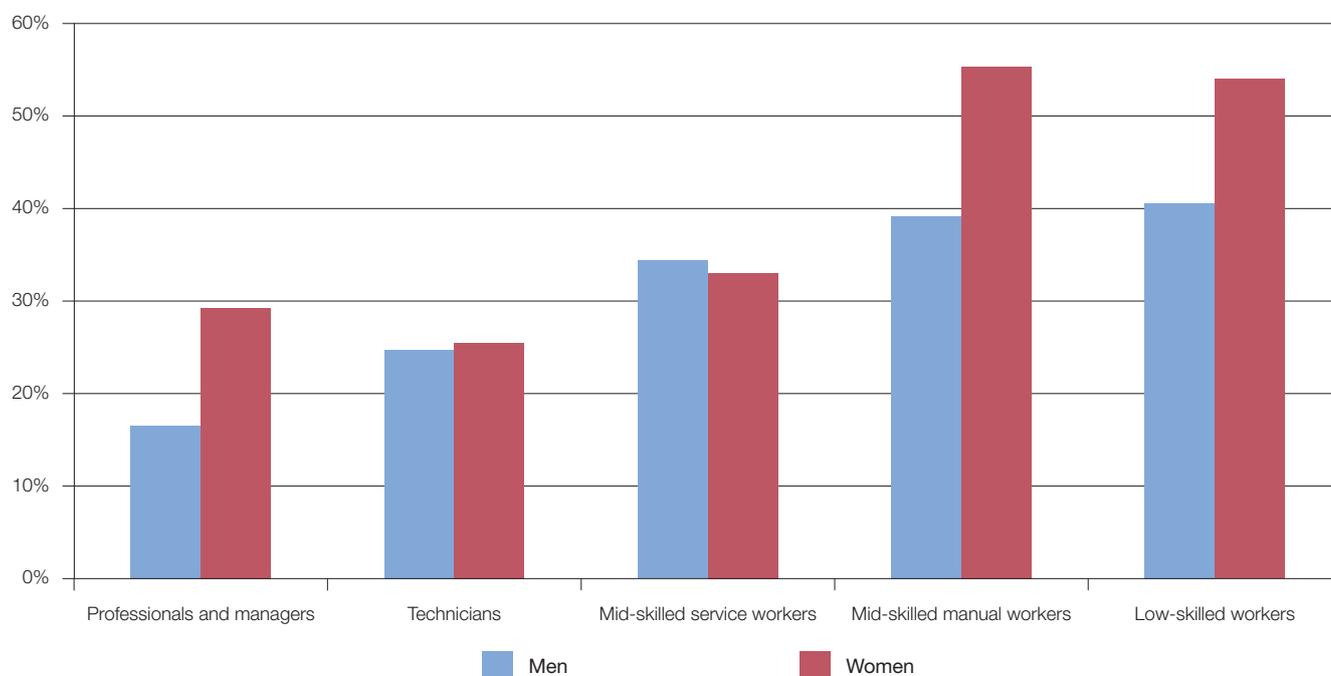


Figure 32: Percentage of workers aged 50–54 who do not think they will be able to do the same job when 60, by gender and occupation



As for working time, research demonstrates that a wish to leave the labour market early is also due to a desire for free time and the search for a means of reconciling occupational and private obligations. Time preferences and specific demands regarding work–life balance are important for all workers, but have specific characteristics at different ages. The desire to reduce working time is significant for older workers. The main reasons given for an intention to work less or to retire earlier are being tired, a need for more time for the family, or deteriorating health. Overall, 28.6% of those aged 50 to 54 and 29.1% of those aged 55 to 59 would like to work fewer hours. Figure 33 shows the proportion of men and women in their 50s – in different occupations – who say that they would prefer to work less than they do. For both sexes, the proportions are sizeable among professionals and managers. Among low-skilled workers, the proportion of those who want to work fewer hours increases in the 50s for both sexes.

Attitudes towards work and exit from work

The fifth EWCS is not a survey about retirement or about the retirement intentions of individuals. Results that deal

directly with this issue can be found in another survey covering several European countries, SHARE (Survey on Health and Retirement in Europe).⁴ However, the EWCS has the advantage of investigating current working conditions more precisely in all Member States. It is thus possible to assess the links between several features of work situations (those that were used in Chapter 4 to study health and job satisfaction) and the four variables presented in the previous section as four possible markers of intent to leave the labour market as soon as possible.

In the statistical analysis developed in this section, workers over 60 are not taken into account, as Q75 is not asked of them.

The first variable examined is the feeling that health is at risk because of work – which could enhance the wish not to extend one’s working life. Table 16 presents the results of the regression analysis among employees 50–59 years old. It indicates, first, that for both sexes this feeling is less widespread in the 55–59 age category compared to the 50–54 age group, probably because some of the employees who perceived their health as being at risk cease working sooner and therefore did not participate in the survey. This result is congruent with those described in Chapter 3 in the discussion about links between age and working conditions.

⁴ Information is available at <http://www.share-project.org/>.

Figure 33: Percentage of workers who would prefer to work less, by occupation, age group and gender

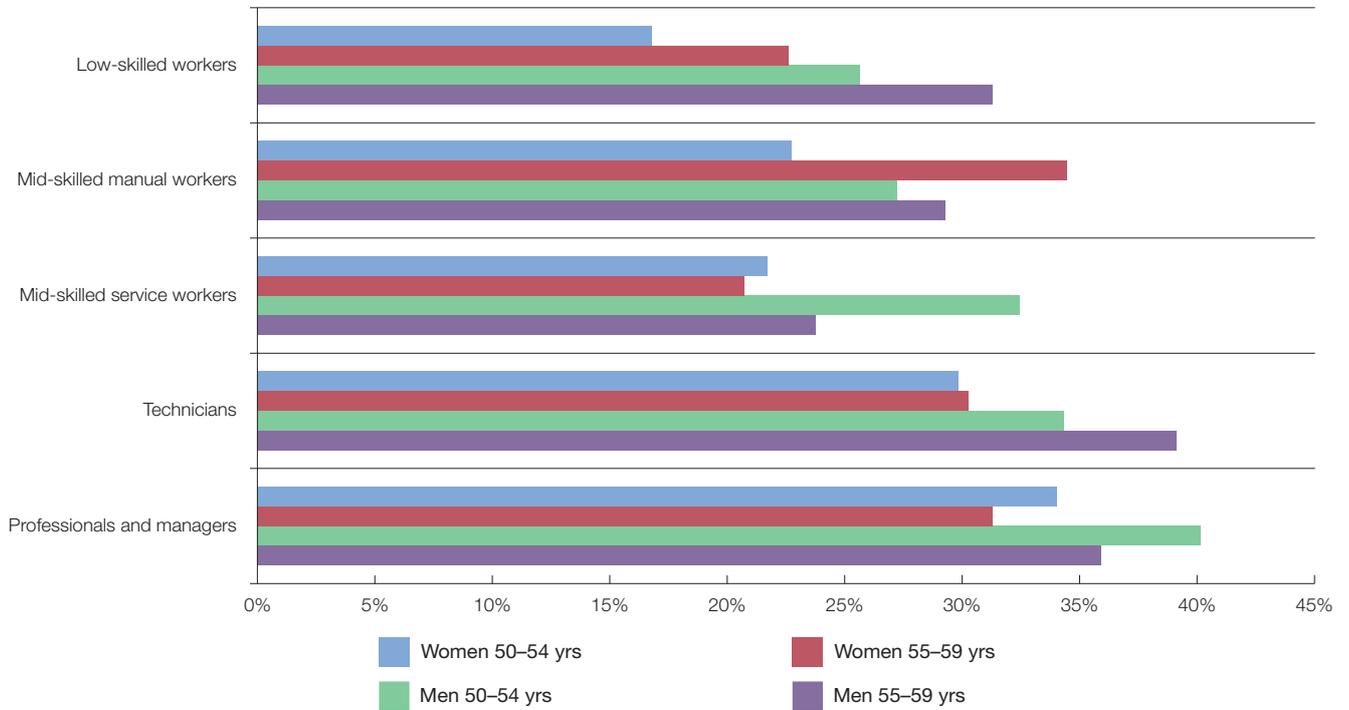


Table 16: Health at risk, workers aged 50-59

	Men (OR)	Women (OR)
55-59 (vs. 50-54)	0.63	0.96
Technicians (vs. managers and professionals)	1.51	0.69
Mid-skilled service workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.18	0.30
Mid-skilled manual workers (vs. managers and professionals)	2.54	0.43
Low-skilled workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.83	0.35
Shift work or night work (≥ 5 nights a month) (vs. no)	1.67	1.80
Working hours do not fit well (vs. do fit well)	1.79	1.48
Tiring or painful positions at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	2.61	3.61
Work with tight deadlines at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	1.26	1.98
Support weak (vs. support not weak)	1.38	1.63
Latitude weak (vs. latitude not weak)	1.24	1.34
Job insecurity – yes (vs. no)	1.35	0.97
No prospects for career advancement – no (vs. yes)	1.41	1.20

Note: OR = odd ratios; reference group shown in brackets; for a guide to reading odds ratios, see the note at the start of Chapter 3.

Table 16 also shows that the influence of occupational category is as expected for men: the worst situation is that of mid-skilled manual workers and low-skilled workers. This is not the case for women. The highest odds ratio for women is that of managers and professionals (1, as managers and professionals are the

reference category). This finding confirms the results of the descriptive analysis presented in the previous section. Older female managers and professionals' opinion about their health being at risk because of work would require specific investigations to understand better this rather counter-intuitive statement.

When one considers the characteristics of work situations, the major influence on feeling that their health is at risk among workers aged 50–59 is exposure to tiring or painful positions, with a 2.6 odds ratio for men and 3.6 for women. Apart from physical strain, the most significant factor seems to be the exposure to shift work or night work, with an odds ratio of 1.7 for men and 1.8 for women. Every other item in this analysis also has significant effects, except for job insecurity among women.

Similar results occur when the variables are examined in relation to a slightly different question, ‘Does your work affect your health negatively?’ This question refers to the perceived links between work and current self-evaluated health, while the earlier question included possible deleterious consequences in the medium and long term. However, Table 17 shows that the effects of age, occupation and working conditions do not differ very much from those displayed in Table 16.

One question is more directly linked to issues of sustainability: ‘Do you think you will be able to do the same job when

60?’ Table 18 presents the results of the same multivariate analysis of this question and shows that workers aged 55–59 are less likely to feel unable (more likely to feel able) to do the same job when they are 60. This is not a surprise, for two reasons. First, the finishing line of age 60 is closer for respondents aged 55 or more than it is for younger respondents. A second, hypothetical reason may be that some employees who would feel unable to stay in the job have actually stopped work at the age of about 57 or 58.

Occupational category plays a part too. Low-skilled workers, and even mid-skilled manual workers, are significantly more likely to feel unable to stay in the job. When considering work situation characteristics, the highest odds ratio, for men, is for tiring or painful positions (2.3). For women, the most significant item is working hours not fitting well with home life (2.1). Several other factors appear to have significant – though not necessarily important – effects on the probability of feeling unable to stay in the job: shift or night work (men), tight deadlines (men and women), poor job latitude (men), job insecurity (men and women), and poor prospects for career advancement (men).

Table 17: Work affects health negatively, workers aged 50–59

	Men (OR)	Women (OR)
55–59 (vs. 50–54)	1.01	0.98
Technicians (vs. managers and professionals)	1.37	0.59
Mid-skilled service workers (vs. managers and professionals)	0.93	0.37
Mid-skilled manual workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.48	0.41
Low-skilled workers (vs. managers and professionals)	0.98	0.44
Shift work or night work (≥ 5 nights a month) (vs. no)	1.44	1.60
Working hours do not fit well (vs. do fit well)	2.26	1.84
Tiring or painful positions at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	2.58	3.63
Work with tight deadlines at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	1.39	1.49
Support weak (vs. support not weak)	1.43	1.54
Latitude weak (vs. latitude not weak)	1.50	1.25
Job insecurity – yes (vs. no)	1.13	1.17
No prospects for career advancement – no (vs. yes)	1.37	1.30

Note: OR = odd ratios; reference group shown in brackets; for a guide to reading odds ratios, see the note at the start of Chapter 3.

Table 18: Think they will be unable to do the same job when 60, workers aged 50–59

	Men (OR)	Women (OR)
55–59 (vs. 50–54)	0.73	0.59
Technicians (vs. managers and professionals)	1.16	0.76
Mid-skilled service workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.08	0.80
Mid-skilled manual workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.46	1.72
Low-skilled workers (vs. managers and professionals)	1.29	1.57
Shift work or night work (≥ 5 nights a month) (vs. no)	1.26	1.11
Working hours do not fit well (vs. do fit well)	1.56	2.12
Tiring or painful positions at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	2.27	1.85
Work with tight deadlines at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	1.53	1.50
Support weak (vs. support not weak)	0.88	1.14
Latitude weak (vs. latitude not weak)	1.39	0.90
Job insecurity – yes (vs. no)	1.37	1.36
No prospects for career advancement – no (vs. yes)	1.60	1.28

Note: OR = odd ratios; reference group shown in brackets; for a guide to reading odds ratios, see the note at the start of Chapter 3.

It should be borne in mind that when several factors accumulate in an individual situation, the corresponding odds ratios multiply. As an example, among men, a mid-skilled manual worker exposed to shift or night work with painful positions, tight deadlines and no prospects for advancement is 10.2 times more likely to report not being able to do the same job when 60 than a manager or professional not exposed to these factors and having some career prospects (that is, $1.46 \times 1.26 \times 2.27 \times 1.53 \times 1.60 = 10.2$).

A final question that is indicative of the sustainability of a job is whether workers wish to work less. For older workers, the question may indicate an attempt to reduce difficulties faced in working conditions or to build a transition between working life and retirement. Table 19 displays the analysis results for this question. It first shows that there is no significant difference between the age groups 50–54 and 55–59. As for occupational categories, managers and professionals appear to be most likely to want to work less, which could be associated with the fact that their working time is relatively high overall.

When looking at the characteristics of the work situation, the highest odds ratio is unsurprisingly for working hours not fitting well with family or social commitments outside work (Q41) (2.0 for men and 1.8 for women), which plays an important part in many aspects of health and satisfaction. One can also notice the significant, although not very strong, effect of tiring or painful positions (odds ratio of 1.3 for men and 1.2 for women) and, at a higher level, the effect of weak social support (odds ratio of 1.4 for men and 1.6 for women).

Self-employed workers

Using the same variables as for employees, this section gives a short overview of the key factors that are unfavourable to work sustainability for the self-employed. For reasons of statistical reliability, age groups of ten years between 30 and 60 years are used, rather than the five-year groups used for employees.

From 30 to 59, the proportion of self-employed workers who consider that their health is at risk and that work affects their health negatively is slightly higher than for employees (Figure 29). Variations between age categories are smoother here than for employees, for women and for men. Perceived health risks and impacts are more frequent among men than women at all ages, except beyond 60.

Like employees, the proportion of self-employed workers who declare that they feel able to continue their current job until the age of 60 decreases with age. In the 50–59 age group, the self-employed are more confident than employees that they can continue until 60. Only 21% of men and 25% of women do not think so, against 29% and 31% respectively among employees.

In the 40–49 age group, as in the group aged 50–59, self-employed are more numerous than employees in wishing that they could work fewer hours. There is little difference between women and men among the self-employed.

Table 19: Prefer to work less, workers aged 50–59

	Men (OR)	Women (OR)
55–59 (vs. 50–54)	1.07	1.05
Technicians (vs. managers and professionals)	0.91	0.83
Mid-skilled service workers (vs. managers and professionals)	0.63	0.59
Mid-skilled manual workers (vs. managers and professionals)	0.56	0.74
Low-skilled workers (vs. managers and professionals)	0.52	0.45
Shift work or night work (≥ 5 nights a month) (vs. no)	0.79	0.91
Working hours do not fit well (vs. do fit well)	1.99	1.76
Tiring or painful positions at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	1.31	1.22
Work with tight deadlines at least half the time – yes (vs. no)	1.02	0.99
Support weak (vs. support not weak)	1.40	1.60
Latitude weak (vs. latitude not weak)	1.15	1.28
Job insecurity – yes (vs. no)	1.00	0.76
No prospects for career advancement – no (vs. yes)	0.96	0.97

Note: OR = odd ratios; reference group shown in brackets; for a guide to reading odds ratios, see the note at the start of Chapter 3.

Table 20: Exposure to factors unfavourable to work sustainability (%), self-employed workers, by age group and gender

		< 30 years	30–39 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	60+ years	All
Health or safety at risk because of work	Men	24	31	33	33	24	30
	Women	20	17	23	21	27	21
Work mainly affects health negatively	Men	21	29	31	31	22	28
	Women	14	17	27	29	29	24
Will not be able to do the same job when 60	Men	53	38	29	21	–	33
	Women	53	37	42	25	–	38
Wish to work fewer hours a week	Men	30	47	43	42	34	41
	Women	15	31	40	40	28	33

Accordingly, when comparing job sustainability for the self-employed and for employees, the former are more likely to continue their job until 60, but with a strong wish to work less, while the latter have more doubts about continuing until 60 but also have a lower wish for a reduction in working hours.

As in Chapter 4, we can test the distribution of these factors according to the most populated occupational categories among male and female self-employed, for the age groups 40–49 and 50–59. Numbers of respondents in the group aged 60 and over were too small for statistical

comparison. The same occupational categories as in Chapter 4 are selected:

- managers and professionals (ISCO 01 and 02 together) – men and women;
- service and sales workers (ISCO 05) – women only;
- skilled agricultural and fishery workers (ISCO 06) – men and women;
- craft and related trades workers (ISCO 07) – men only.

Table 21: Comparison between age groups 40–49 and 50–59 (%) in exposure to unfavourable factors by age group, according to selected occupations

	Health or safety at risk because of work		Negative impacts of work on health		Will not be able to do the same job when 60		Wish to work fewer hours a week	
	40–49 years	50–59 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	40–49 years	50–59 years	40–49 years	50–59 years
Managers and professionals – men	21	18	24	20	26	8	41	53
Managers and professionals – women	12	19	21	25	32	26	49	52
Service and sales workers – women	18	8	19	14	48	17	35	39
Skilled agricultural workers – men	50	54	51	49	33	44	45	38
Skilled agricultural workers – women	45	41	52	53	47	41	37	49
Craft workers – men	57	42	39	39	39	25	47	29
All occupations – men	33	33	31	31	29	21	43	42
All occupations – women	23	21	27	29	42	25	40	40

Table 21 highlights the difficult situation of the ageing self-employed in agriculture and fisheries, for both women and men. Since agricultural workers represent more than 20% of all older self-employed workers, the weight of this occupational group in the overall picture of self-employed is huge.

Work sustainability for men in craft occupations is also worse than the average. Indicators of weak sustainability get higher scores for the 40–49 age group than for the 50–59 age group. This period of working life (40–49) may be critical for decisions related to the continuity of a job.

Female and male managers and professionals, another significant subgroup among the older self-employed (29% of self-employed aged 50+), present more favourable figures, mainly for health issues. However, the wish to reduce working hours is significantly higher than the average, and this is the case for women mainly. Women in service and sales occupations also present more favourable figures than the average for all occupations, but between 40 and 49 there seems to be concern about being able to continue the job until the age of 60.

Comparison between **countries**

Comparison between countries

Introduction

This chapter aims to compare the working conditions of the ageing workforce across the countries of the European Union. The underlying question is the degree of diversity across Member States in the sustainability of work. Do the situation of older workers and the differences between age groups vary from one country to another?

Knowing that there is a degree of variety across countries in retirement policies, early retirement, working conditions and the labour market, one can expect to see differences between countries. On the other hand, the common European policies and, notably, the Stockholm targets and the Barcelona objectives (European Commission, 2011b) may favour harmonisation. Therefore it is interesting to examine the degree of variety in working conditions for the ageing workforce across countries and, accordingly, the degree of specificity in each particular country.

The first section analyses to what extent countries display differences in the work situation of two groups of workers: those aged 40–49, on the one hand, and those aged 50–59, on the other hand.

The chapter then considers the issues of health, well-being and satisfaction with working conditions among the ageing workforce in the Member States. From the variables used in Chapter 4 to deal with these issues, two key variables are selected here: general satisfaction regarding working conditions (Q76) and self-reported health status (Q68).

The third section explores how workers perceive the sustainability of their current job. The main focus here is on the population of respondents aged 50–59, examining the answers to question Q75, ‘Do you think you will be able to do the same job you are doing now when you are 60 years old?’

Building on these results, the final section analyses whether countries can be grouped in clusters or types of regimes of sustainable work.

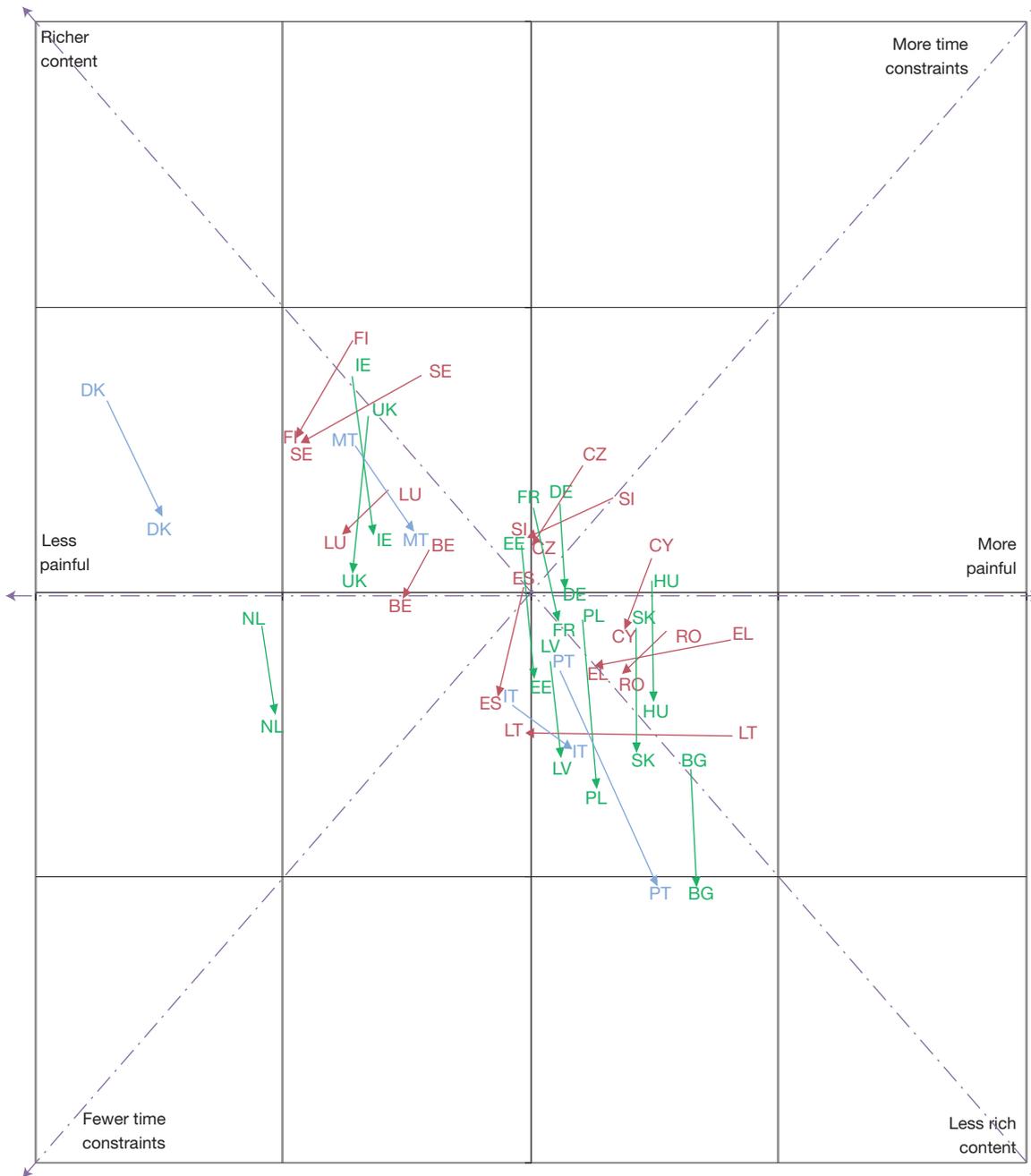
As the cross-country comparison focuses on the issue of work sustainability until 60, only the 40–49 and 50–59 age groups are considered in this chapter.

Working conditions of older workers

Are there differences across countries in working conditions of older workers? National differences in institutional regimes (Esping-Andersen, 1999; Hall and Soskice, 2001) – notably in employment systems, collective bargaining contexts and social security regimes – support the hypothesis that working conditions for older workers will vary from one country to another.

The multiple correspondence analysis presented in Figure 34 uses the same active variables as in the results presented in the final part of Chapter 3. It confirms that working conditions for older workers vary from one country to another, and it indicates to what extent.

Figure 34: Characteristics of work situations, age groups 40–49 and 50–59



Note: There is no arrow for Austria (AT) because the two points are very close to each other and located close to the centre of the graph: (-0.02, 0.08) for workers aged 40–49 and (-0.03, 0.07) for workers age 50–59.

To recap on how to interpret the plot: the results of the multiple correspondence analysis are organised along three axes.

- The first axis, oriented horizontally, indicates the degree of job painfulness (including the lack of job latitude), from low on the left to high on the right of the graph.
- The second axis is oriented from the bottom left, or south-west, corner to the upper right, or north-east, corner of the graph. It reflects a number of variables that indicate the weight of time constraints, which increases from left to right. Physical strains are located between the first and second axes, in an east-by-north-east orientation
- The third axis represents variables related to the quality of job content, which decreases from the upper left, or north-west, to the bottom right, or south-east, of the graph.

The first finding from Figure 34 is the point where each of the arrows ends. This point indicates the state of working conditions for workers aged 50–59 in each of the countries. Since it combines all variables for a country into a single representation, Figure 34 clearly indicates that working conditions for older workers vary significantly from one country to another.

Two ‘extreme’ cases are Denmark and Bulgaria. Respondents’ answers in Denmark show that the quality of work for older workers is high in that country. They benefit from latitude at work, less painful conditions and a rather low level of physical strain, while the content of their job can be seen as ‘richer’, including access to training, learning on the job, and support from colleagues or managers. On the opposite side of the graph is Bulgaria, where working conditions are perceived much less favourably. There the content of work is seen as poorer, while job latitude is low and work is more painful.

Between those two situations, and closer to Denmark than to Bulgaria, is a group of countries where work seems more sustainable than average, with a richer content and a higher degree of job latitude: Belgium, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The quality of the job content plays an important role in the distribution of these countries in the graph, while job latitude is less relevant. The Netherlands is close to this group, with a situation where older workers see their job as allowing autonomy, and where, compared to other countries, the pressure of time constraints is lighter. This may be related to the fact that, in the Netherlands, the proportion of part-time work is very high.

In all other countries situated further right on the graph, the perceived degree of latitude at work is lower. This is the case, for instance, in the Czech Republic, France, Germany and Slovenia. For a group of countries located in the south-east of the graph – Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and others – the situation of older workers is less favourable on the variables related to the quality of job content and job latitude.

If there are national differences in working conditions for older workers, to what extent, then, do differences between age groups differ from one country to another? When comparing workers aged from 40 to 49 and those aged 50–59, are there national differences? Figure 34 identifies the differences, country by country, in working conditions for the two generations. The arrows indicate the situation in each country, linking working conditions of the 40–49 age group (start of the arrow) to the 50–59 group (end of the arrow).

Both the direction and the length of the arrows are relevant in this graph. For each country, the direction of the arrow indicates whether working conditions are perceived as more favourable (when it goes left) or less favourable (when it goes right) by the age group over 50, compared to the 40–49 age group. The length of the arrow indicates how large the difference is between the two groups, again for each country.

The first and key observation that one can draw from the data presented in the graph is that there are differences between the two age groups in all countries. Nevertheless, the situation of workers aged 50–59 and the situation of workers aged 40–49 are always situated in the same area of the graph. This means that the country effect is a key factor in determining working conditions for the two age groups, and it is within the specific situation in a given country that there are slight differences between age groups. In sum, working conditions for older workers are always relative to the situation of all workers in a given country.

When one looks at the direction of the arrows, the graph shows that some countries share the same type of differences between the two age groups. Austria, with a very small arrow, is alone. There are three types of patterns here.

- In the first pattern, the arrow goes downwards vertically or almost vertically (green arrows in the graph), which indicates that, compared to workers aged 40 to 49, older workers perceive their working conditions as less rich but also as less subject to time constraints. This is the case in Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia and the United Kingdom.

- In the second pattern, the direction of the arrow also goes down but is also somewhat oriented to the right, or towards the south-east (blue arrows). This is the case in Denmark, Italy, Malta and Portugal. This means that, in those countries, respondents aged 50–59 perceive their work as less rich and less autonomous when compared to workers aged 40–49.
- In the third pattern, the arrow goes towards the south-west or west of the figure (red arrows). Here one finds Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Lithuania, Romania, Luxembourg, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden. The direction of the arrow indicates that the main variables that differ between the younger and older age groups are related to physical strain, and to schedules and time constraints, such as night work, shift work, tight deadlines, reconciliation of work and private life. In those countries, workers aged 50–59 perceive their working conditions as less subject to time constraints, compared to workers aged 40–49.

Again, it is important to note that in all three patterns, the key observation is that the disparity in working conditions between countries is much larger than the disparity between the two age groups within the countries.

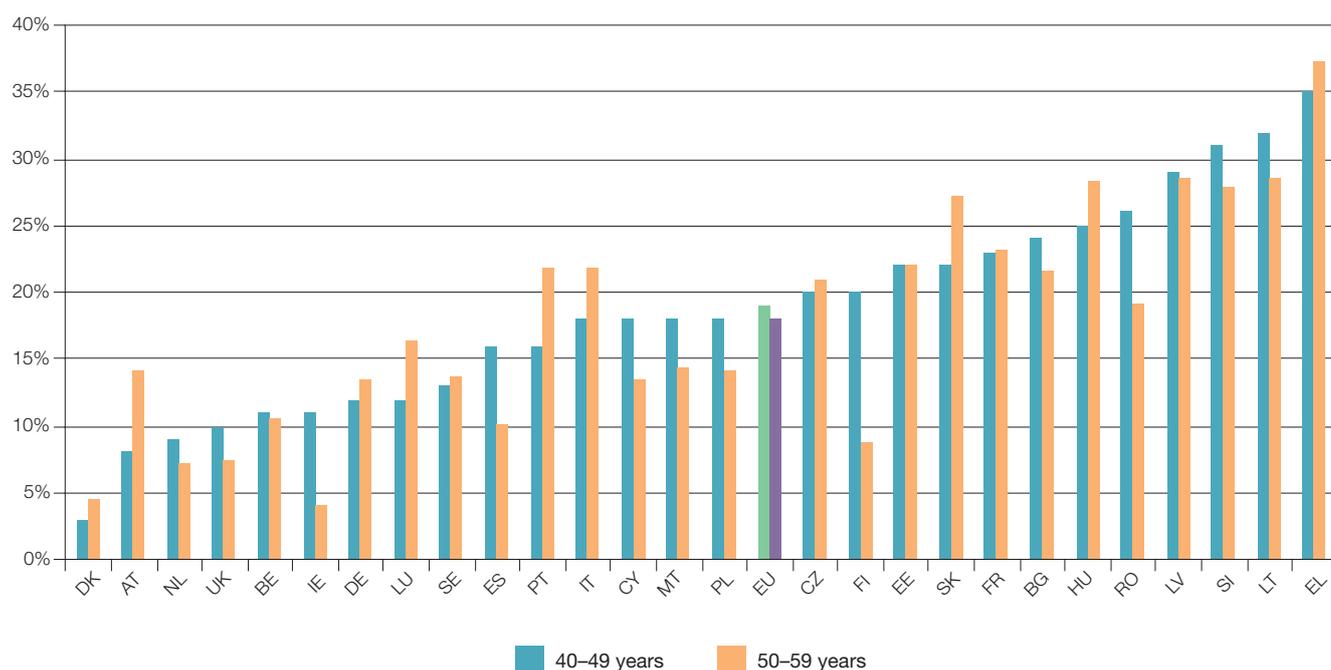
Health and dissatisfaction with working conditions

This section focuses on national differences, if any, in workers' satisfaction with their working conditions (Q76) and general health status (Q68) as they get older – two of the key variables examined in Chapter 4 for the EU as a whole.

Figure 35 shows the results of answers to Q76 for respondents aged 40–49 and 50–59, indicating the proportion of employees who declared themselves not very satisfied or not satisfied at all with their working conditions as a whole. The European mean percentage of dissatisfied workers is 19% in the age group 40–49 and 18% in the age group 50–59.

Figure 35 shows a group of countries where dissatisfaction with working conditions is considerably lower than the EU average in both age groups: Denmark, Austria, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Belgium, Ireland, Germany, Luxembourg, Sweden and Spain. Conversely, in another group of countries, dissatisfaction is significantly higher in both age groups: Greece, Lithuania, Slovenia, Latvia, Hungary, and to a lesser extent Bulgaria, France, Slovakia and Estonia. Those countries

Figure 35: Dissatisfaction with working conditions (%), EU Member States, by age groups 40–49 and 50–59



are situated on the right side of Figure 34 and, with the exception of France and Estonia, downwards on the axis indicating less rich content.

Figure 35 also shows how dissatisfaction regarding working conditions differs between the 40–49 and the 50–59 age groups. Significantly increasing dissatisfaction is observed in Austria, Luxembourg, Portugal, Italy, Slovakia and Hungary. A substantial decrease in dissatisfaction levels between these two age groups, of more than 25%, can be seen in the UK, Ireland, Spain, Cyprus, Finland and Romania. Here, there is no clear correspondence between increasing or decreasing dissatisfaction and the length or direction of the arrow in Figure 34.

In terms of gender differences, the small size of the respective samples of women and men in the age group 50–59 in each country requires caution with the data. Nevertheless, a general observation can be drawn from Figure 36, that although the European average percentage of men and women aged 50–59 who declare themselves unsatisfied with working conditions tends to be almost the same (16.1% for women and 16.9% for men), there are gender variations among countries.

In Denmark, Sweden, Finland, and the Netherlands, where average dissatisfaction levels are rather low, there are wide gender gaps in dissatisfaction to the disadvantage of women. For instance, in Sweden, the low average score of 14% dissatisfaction with working conditions among

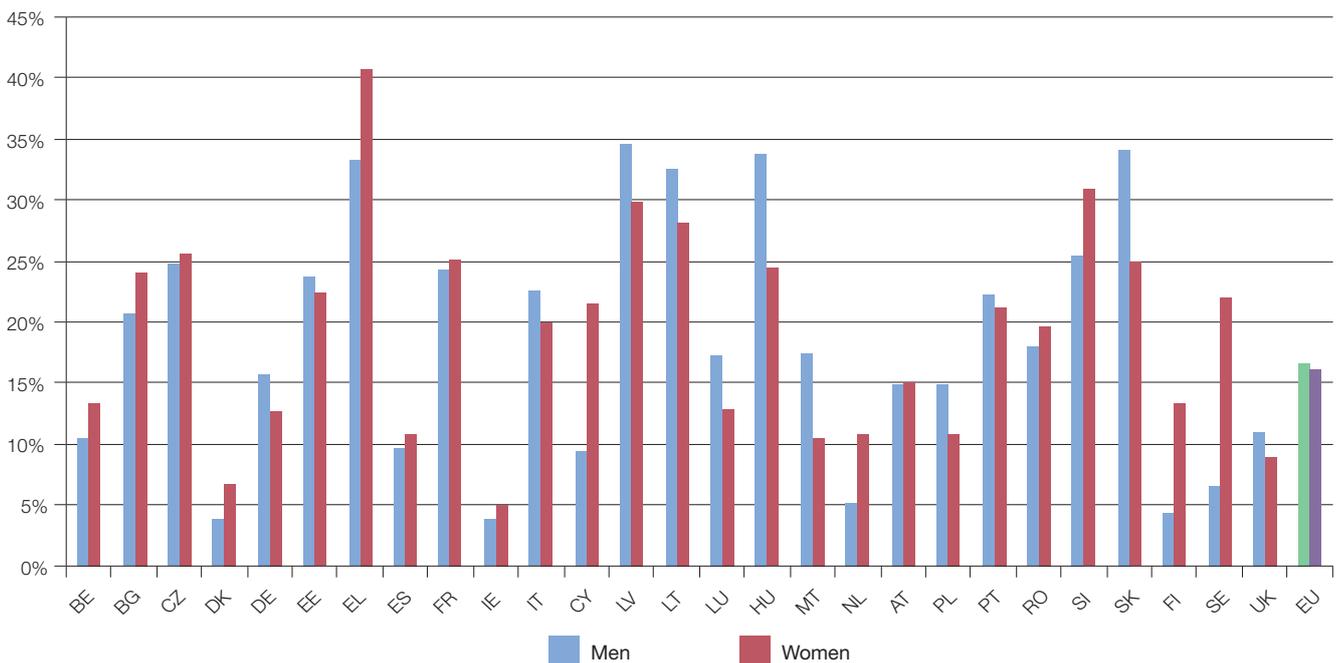
the 50–59 age group is composed of 7% unsatisfied men and 22% unsatisfied women. Other countries present the same type of gender gap: Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece and Cyprus. Conversely, wide gender gaps to the disadvantage of men are more frequent in countries where the average level of dissatisfaction is high, as is the case in Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary and Slovakia. Germany, Malta and Poland present the same type of gender gap, to a lesser extent.

Self-reported health status (Q68) is another key variable that was used in Chapter 4 in order to assess health and well-being of workers. It is often considered in existing literature as a predictor of job sustainability. Figure 37 illustrates the proportion of employees who declare that their health in general is neither very good nor good in the age groups 40–49 and 50–59, and by country. Figure 37 not only shows significant variations in levels of poor health, but also major differences between the two age groups in several countries.

The EU average percentage of employees who declare that their health is not good is 22% in the 40–49 age group, and 35% in the 50–59 age group. The highest levels in both age groups are observed in the three Baltic countries and in Slovenia, Hungary, Slovakia, Portugal and Romania.

Health is more often perceived as poor in the 50–59 age groups than the 40–49 groups, and this difference is particularly significant in most countries, including some

Figure 36: Dissatisfaction with working conditions (%), EU Member States, 50–59 age group, by gender



countries where the perceived level of health is not bad, as, for example, in Greece, Spain, Luxembourg or Germany. The relative difference is small in a limited number of countries: Ireland, Malta, Sweden, Belgium, Finland, Romania and Slovenia. Except for Malta, these countries belong to the third pattern (red arrows) in Figure 34.

Job sustainability at 60

Figure 38 shows the responses given by workers aged 50–59 to question Q75, ‘Do you think you will be able to do the same job you are doing now when you are 60 years old?’ The European average percentage of workers who answered that they would not be able to do the same job when they reached the age of 60 is 30%. The results indicate differences between countries, some displaying a very low rate of negative answers, such as Ireland (9%), the Netherlands (11%), Sweden (14%), the United Kingdom (16%), Denmark (16%) and Finland (18%). The country most distant from the average is Slovenia, with 65% of answers being negative.

Figure 39 shows the proportion of negative answers from workers aged 50–59 by gender and by country. In some

countries, the proportion of these answers among male respondents in this specific population is lower than the European average; this is the case in Cyprus, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom. For women, the level of negative respondents in the same countries is lower, with the exceptions of Cyprus, Estonia and Latvia.

In some countries, the gender gap is rather wide. Women are significantly more likely than men to think they could not continue in the same job until 60 in Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Hungary, Austria, Poland and Romania. Only in a few countries does job sustainability appear significantly more favourable among women than men: the Czech Republic, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Finland.

Accordingly, the proportion of workers who declare themselves able to do the same job when getting older varies significantly from one country to another, with gender differences across countries.

Some hypotheses can be suggested in order to explain such differences between countries.

Figure 37: Poor self-reported health, EU Member States, by age groups 40–49 and 50–59

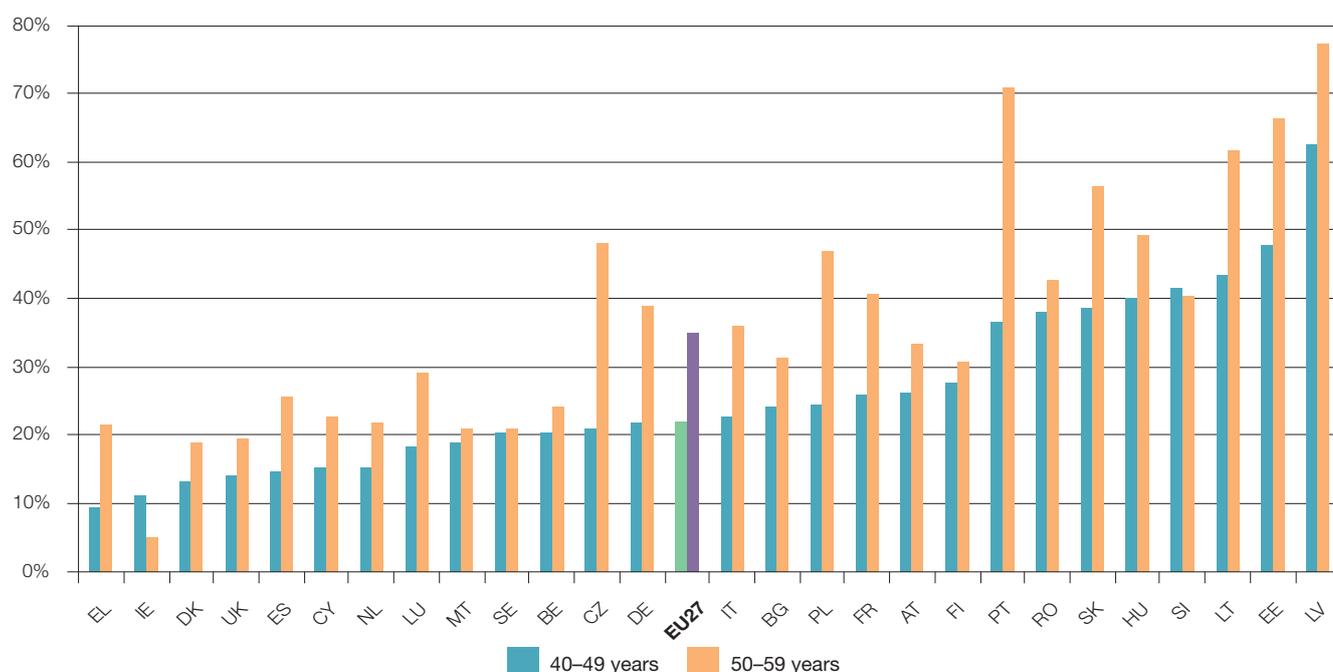


Figure 38: Percentage of workers aged 50–59 who do not think they will be able to do the same job at 60, by EU Member State

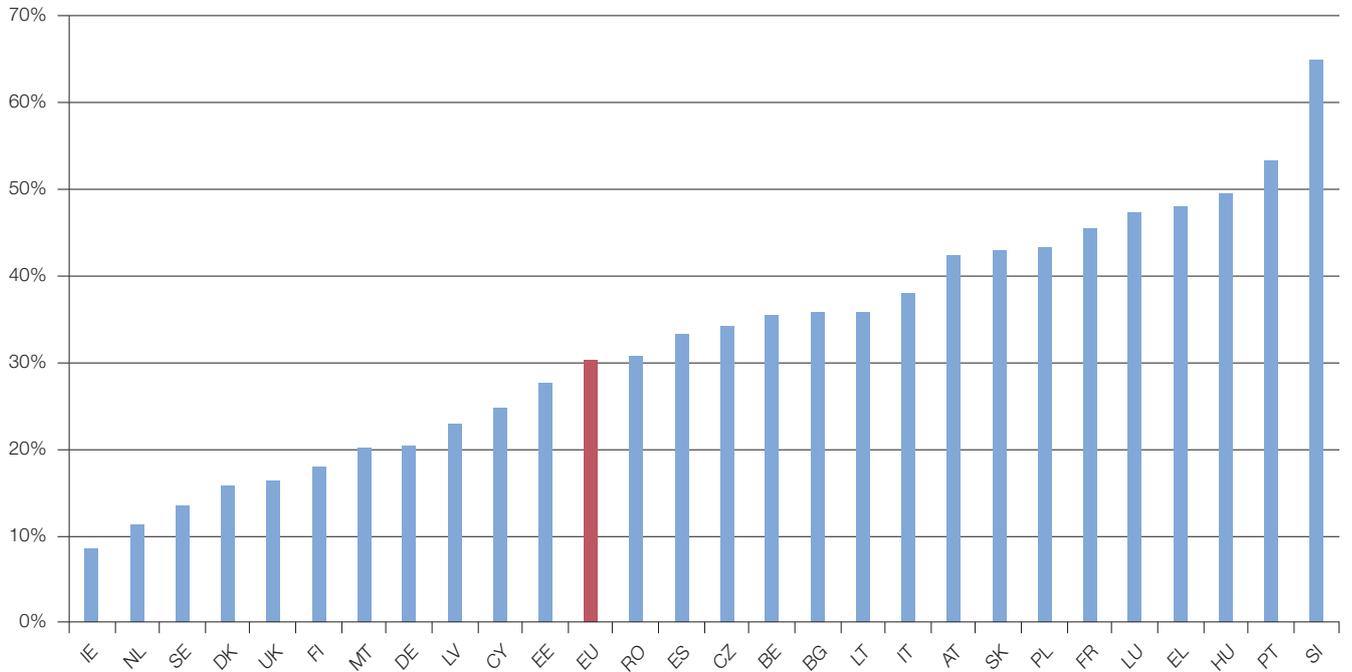
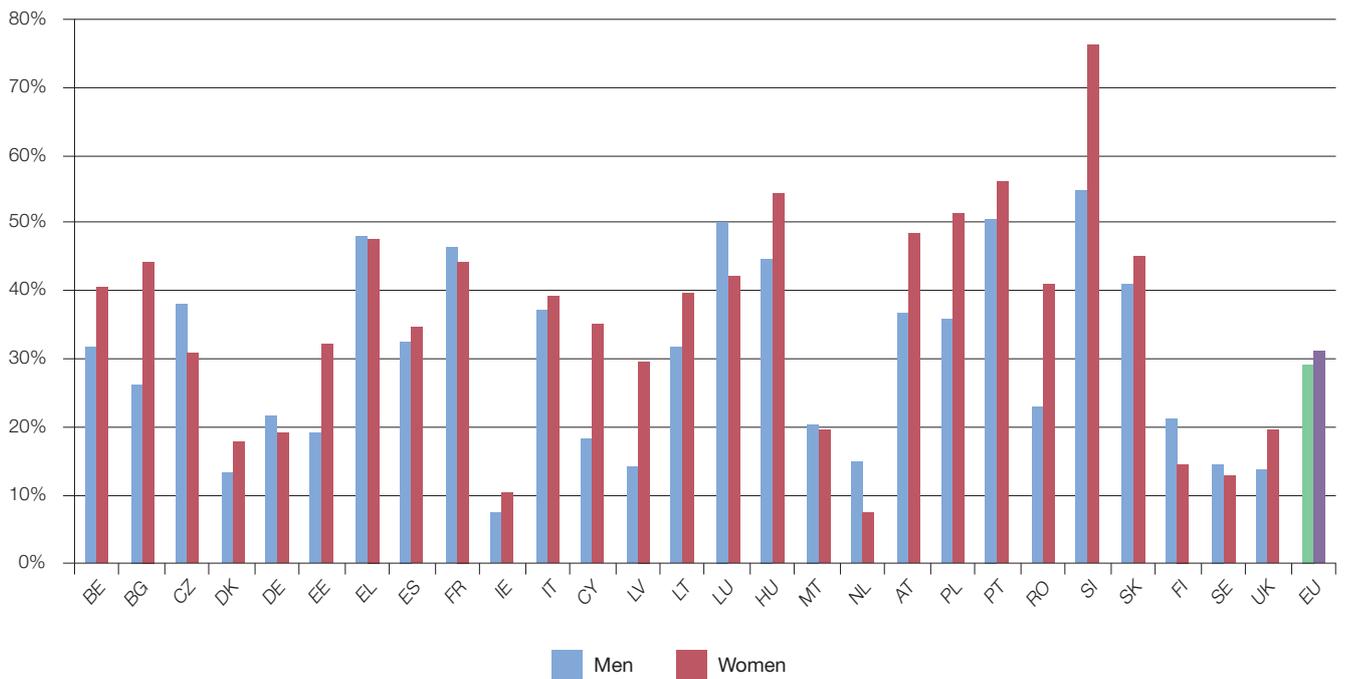


Figure 39: Percentage of workers aged 50–59 who do not think they will be able to do the same job at 60, EU Member States, by gender



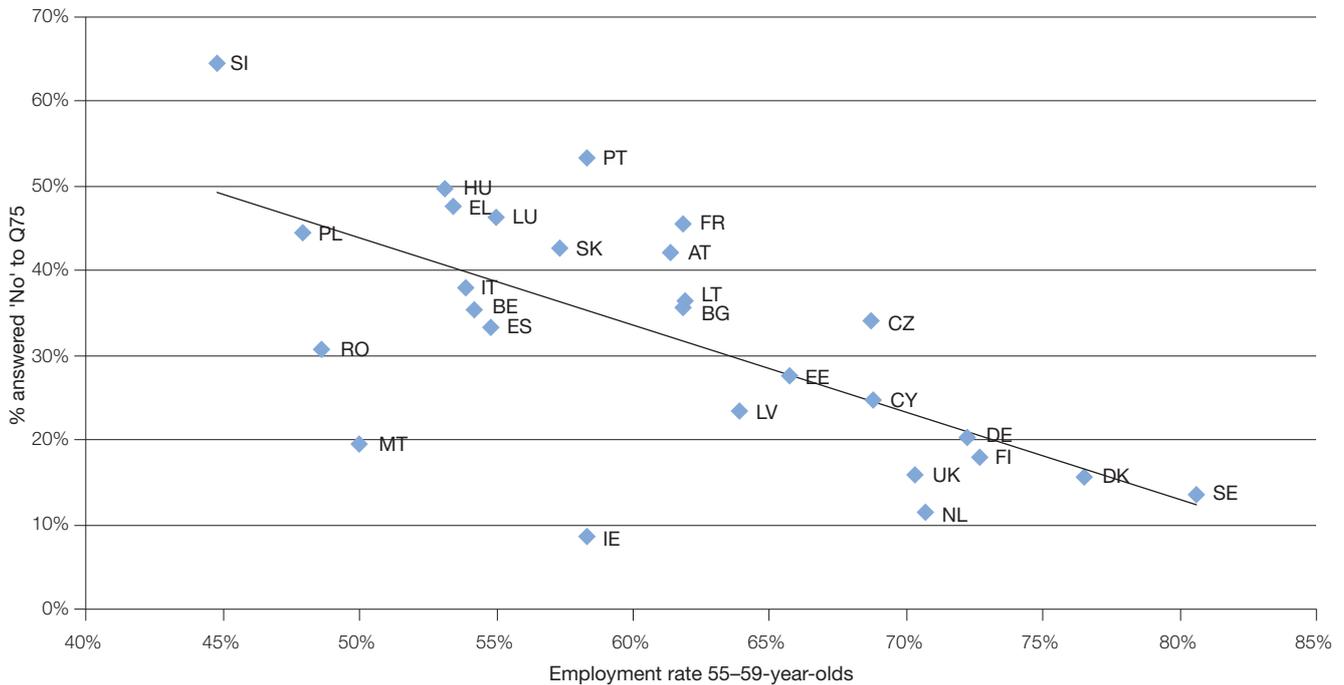
A first hypothesis concerns the correlation between perceived job sustainability until age 60 and the employment rate just before 60 in each country. Figure 40 maps this correlation on an X-Y graph. The X-axis represents the employment rate in the age group 55–59. The Y-axis represents the percentage of employees who answered 'No, I don't think so' or 'I wouldn't want to' to Q75. Each dot in the graph represents the position of one country.

Figure 40 shows a rather strong linear trend. Where the employment rate in the 55–59 age group is higher, the proportion of negative answers to Q75 is lower, and vice-versa. The 'outsiders' in the graph are the smaller countries (Slovenia, Malta and Ireland).

This linear relationship between negative answers to Q75 and employment rates of older workers can be interpreted in two different ways. Either the X-axis explains the Y-axis: higher employment rates for those aged 55–59 create a favourable context to job sustainability for the 50–59 group of employees. Or the Y-axis explains the X-axis: where jobs are perceived as more sustainable until 60, the employment rate is higher in the 55–59 group.

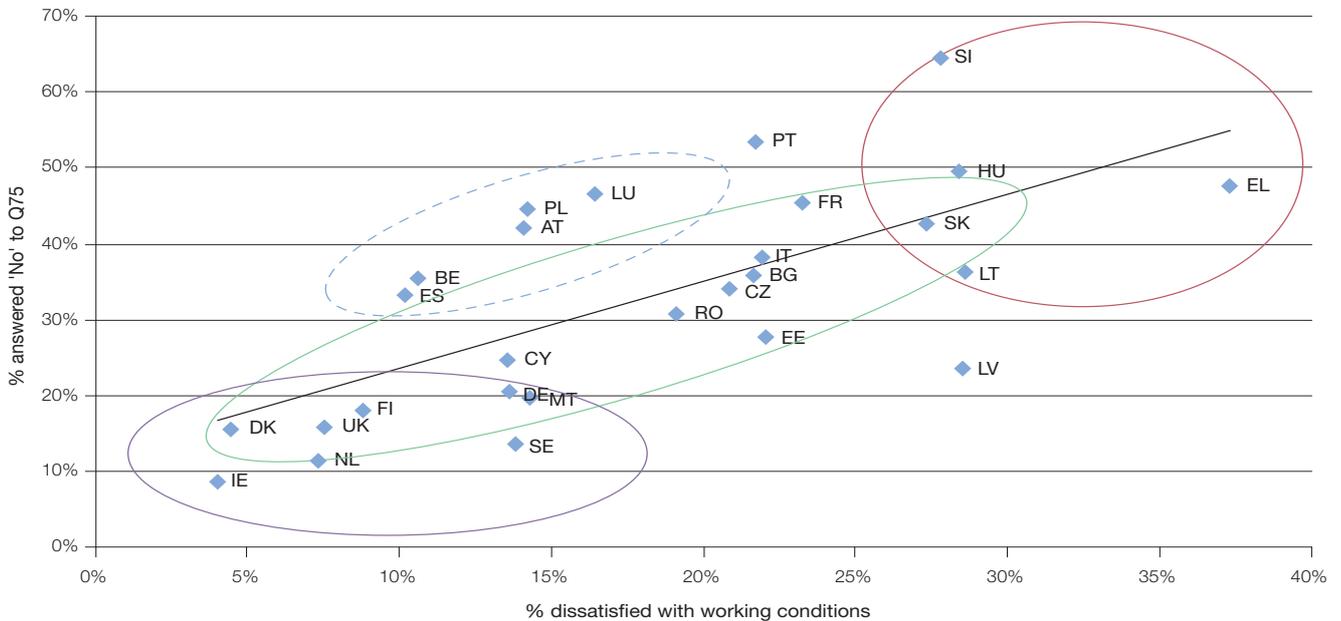
A second hypothesis concerns the correlation between perceived job sustainability and the level of dissatisfaction with working conditions. Figure 41 maps this correlation on an X-Y graph. The X-axis represents the proportion of employees who are dissatisfied with their general working conditions in the age group 50–59 (Figure 35). The Y-axis represents the percentage of employees who do not feel their job is sustainable to age 60 (as in Figure 40). Each dot represents the position of one country.

Figure 40: Correlation between perceived job sustainability until age 60 and employment rate of 55–59-year-olds, EU Member States



Source: Employment rate data from Labour Force Survey, Eurostat, fourth quarter, 2010

Figure 41: Correlation between perceived job sustainability and the level of dissatisfaction with working conditions, EU Member States



Although the linear correlation is less strong than that in Figure 40, Figure 41 suggests that there are subgroups of countries, according to their position in the graph and their situation related to the trend curve.

- In the blue zone on the lower left of the graph, there is a group of countries where both the proportion of jobs perceived as not sustainable and the proportion of workers dissatisfied with working conditions are low: Finland, Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, Sweden and Malta. These countries are very often on the 'positive side' in the preceding figures: besides good scores in job sustainability and satisfaction regarding working conditions, they also display good scores regarding general health, and they are on the left side in the multi-correspondence analysis of Figure 34, with the exception of Germany.
- The red zone on the top right of the graph contains countries where both the proportion of unsustainable jobs and the proportion of dissatisfied workers (regarding working conditions) are high: Greece, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia and Slovenia. They are on the right side of Figure 34 and, with the exception of Greece, they have poor scores regarding general health.
- In the green zone along the trend line, there are many countries that reflect a linear relation between dissatisfaction with working conditions and the negative perception of job sustainability among workers aged 50–59.

- Finally, in the zone delimited by a dashed blue ellipse, a similar linear relationship exists, but at a higher level of unsustainability: Austria, Belgium, Luxembourg, Poland and Spain. Some other countries, such as Latvia and Portugal, have atypical positions in the X-Y graph.

National differences in perceived sustainability of work

Beyond the mere differences between countries, is it possible to identify types of nationally specific sustainability of work for the ageing workforce? Based on the various sets of data examined so far, Table 22 proposes four tentative ideal-types. They are built from two broad dimensions:

- The first one is the degree of quality of working conditions of older workers, which can be lower or higher relatively, when one considers together the dimensions included in the multi-correspondence analysis (quality of job content, job painfulness and, to a lesser extent, pressure of time constraints), the variables related to health and general satisfaction regarding working conditions, and the indicator of perceived job sustainability.

- The second one is the relative situation of workers aged 50–59 compared to those aged 40–49. This situation can tend to be more favourable or less favourable.

In a first ideal-type, labelled ‘Sustainability’ here, older workers face working conditions of quality, and their situation tends to be even more favourable than for those aged 40–49. This can be considered as highly sustainable working conditions. The opposite ideal-type, labelled ‘Vulnerability’, corresponds to that of older workers who live in a country where working conditions are less favourable, and who face a situation that tends to be relatively less sustainable when compared to workers aged 40–49. A third pattern can be a country where working conditions are more difficult, but where conditions for older workers tend to be slightly more favourable, described here as ‘Relative slight improvement’. In such a context, there is a chance to finish one’s working life with conditions that are not worse than those of middle-aged workers. Finally, in some countries, working conditions tend to be better than elsewhere for all workers, but they also tend to be slightly less favourable for older workers when compared to younger ones. Where this is the case, workers can see their situation as less sustainable and as tending towards relative slight deterioration.

Employment rates start decreasing significantly from 45–49 to 50–54, and continue to fall afterwards, workers over 50 declare themselves unsatisfied with working conditions, and working conditions are more difficult than elsewhere. This is the case, for instance, in Greece, Hungary, Poland and Romania. At the other end of the spectrum are countries with the opposite profile, where the decline in employment rates is rather smooth between 40–49 and 50–59 and only becomes sharp after the age of 60, and where all workers display a high degree of satisfaction and working conditions are more favourable. This is what can be called ‘sustainable work’. Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom tend to approach this state of affairs.

However, remaining at work in a given country does not only depend on the quality of working conditions, but also on numerous other factors (Molinié, 2005). These include individual variables such as health, qualification level and income, and also institutional and economic variables that characterise a given country, such as pension regime, taxation regime, poverty rate, and the structure of employment by occupations, among other factors. Countries obviously display internal coherence that, if one interprets very freely

Table 22: Ideal-types of relative sustainability for older workers

		Quality of working conditions	
		Higher	Lower
Situation of workers over 50, compared to workers aged 40–49	Tends to be more favourable	Sustainability	Relative slight improvement
	Tends to be less favourable	Relative slight deterioration	Vulnerability

The question is, then, what makes the difference between countries? The fifth EWCS proposes factors related to working conditions that indicate that, in countries where working conditions seem more sustainable, older workers are potentially more likely to remain longer in employment. In Denmark, Finland, Sweden and the Netherlands, workers see their working conditions as positive, and this may encourage them to stay longer in employment. On the other side, the analysis of the data clearly indicates that, in a number of countries, respondents indicate that their working conditions are difficult for all generations in their country and, even in cases where working conditions seem to be slightly better for older workers, they remain difficult. This should encourage workers to imagine a better life out of the world of work.

When we compare the findings of this chapter to Table 3 (Chapter 2), which displays the national trend shape in employment rates among older workers, there is no strict equivalence between the groups of countries. What is interesting to note, however, is that some countries share a series of conditions perceived as not sustainable.

the notion of ‘national business system’ proposed by Whitley (2000, p. 33), can be defined as a distinctive pattern of economic and social organisation that varies in degree and mode of structuring working conditions for older workers, leading to a given level of sustainability of work.

The findings in this chapter indicate, in the end, that in most countries of the EU, and particularly the new Member States, working conditions are rather difficult for many workers. This certainly contributes, along with individual, economic and institutional factors, to push older workers out of the labour market if they have any possibility of access to retirement with acceptable income.

There are clearly important differences between countries and, in this context, the differences between generations take place within the specificity of each country. Therefore, when looking at the disparity between age groups, it is crucial to examine this disparity within a given country, in the context of the characteristics of working conditions for the whole employed population, country by country.

Conclusion –
Is work sustainable
for the **ageing**
workforce?

Conclusion – Is work sustainable for the ageing workforce?

Do the working conditions experienced by workers make their work ‘sustainable’, and are specific working conditions likely to encourage workers to remain active in the labour market? This is a key question not only for the understanding of the challenges related to age and work, but also for policymaking in the current agenda on active ageing.

To answer these questions, it is necessary to look at working conditions of older workers, to understand whether they differ from those of younger workers and, if so, to what extent. This report examines these questions by linking two important issues widely covered in the literature but rarely related to each other: research on the quality of work and employment, and research on older workers. To achieve this link, this report starts from an analytical model structured in five dimensions:

- *working conditions*, covering changes in work, risk exposure, unusual working time, time flexibility, work rhythm and emotional pressure;
- *health*, including physical and psychological health, and the self-perception of one’s state of health;
- *the expressive dimension of work*, which includes autonomy, work content, work satisfaction, recognition, skills development and social environment;

- *reconciliation of working and non-working time*, referring to balancing working time with other family and social needs;
- *socioeconomic conditions*, which covers status in employment and job security.

The study presented in this report adopted a three-phase process. The first phase consisted of analysing workers’ exposure to specific work characteristics at different ages. The second phase analysed the effect of specific aspects of work situations on older workers. The third and final phase examined the effects of work situations on the attitudes of older workers to working longer. In each phase, attention was paid to gender differences and to occupational group.

Chapter 2 used data from the fifth EWCS and from Eurostat to establish the background and to examine the main characteristics of the ageing workforce. The decline in employment rates from the age of 45 onwards has a different profile in different countries: in some, a significant decrease in the employment rate begins early, from 45–49 to 50–54; in others, the decrease starts later. Chapter 2 also showed how the distribution of employment by occupational category differs between men and women among salaried workers over the age of 50. The distribution of salaried employment by sectors indicates generational differences. The proportion of salaried workers in industrial activities, public administration and education

increases with age, while the proportion in wholesale, retail, transport and catering, and in business services decreases with age.

Chapter 3 analysed workers' exposure to work characteristics at different ages. It aimed to explore and assess forms of age-related selection mechanisms linked to working conditions. Some characteristics of working conditions may raise special concerns for older workers, and lead either to their attempt to change job and avoid these sources of stress, or to their withdrawal from paid work. The analysis presented in Chapter 3 compared the relationship between age, split into five-year brackets, and selected indicators in the five areas of the analytical model, for both women and men. To take account of a number of structural differences between age groups, multivariate regression analyses were conducted using the variables of age, occupation, part-time working and type of contract to examine the relationship of these variables with exposure to each characteristic of work.

In terms of *working conditions*, the main findings in Chapter 3 can be summarised by three main points: night work and shift work slowly decrease with age, for both women and men; few marked differences appear between age groups in exposure to physical risks (in other words, older workers are still exposed to physical risks); and the proportion of people who work at a very high speed or with tight deadlines decreases with age.

In terms of *reconciliation of working and non-working life*, Chapter 3 first examined the issue of regular changes in work schedule. Reaching the age of 50 is a turning point for both men and women, but in contrasting ways. For men in their 50s, after a regular decrease, there is a stabilisation at around 32% for those affected by regular changes in their working time. For women, between 33% and 34% of those aged 25 to 49 are likely to have work schedules that change regularly; when they reach 50, the proportion starts to decrease, dropping from 34% to 21% at 60 and older. In terms of work–life balance, an overall 17.6% of workers indicate that their work schedule does not fit well with their external commitments. However, workers in this situation seem to be less numerous the older they become. As for the opportunity to take a few hours off during working hours to attend to personal affairs, this increases slowly with age for both men and women from the age of 49 onwards. This is partly due to having positions that give more room for personal autonomy and to achieving seniority in jobs.

Chapter 3 also looked at the *expressive dimension of work*, which refers to the scope for finding social integration through work, to realise one's goals and to develop one's skills. The indicators that deal with learning and training indicate a downward trend for those over the age

of 50. Secondly, in terms of job latitude and the capacity to apply one's ideas at work, getting older has a slightly positive effect on work situation. Thirdly, the proportion of men who declare that they get little support from colleagues and managers increases for those over 50. Fourthly, when they enter their 40s, 64% of women and 56% of men declare that they have no good prospects for career advancement; for men and women in their 50s, these proportions are respectively 75% and 66%.

In examining *socioeconomic characteristics of work*, Chapter 3 presented four main findings. Firstly, fixed-term contracts are less frequent among older workers. Secondly, among workers aged 55–59, about 40% of women work part-time, against 10% of men; among workers aged 60–64, the proportion rises sharply to 60% of women and 30% of men. Thirdly, in terms of seniority, about a quarter of workers aged over 50 (23% of men and 25% of women) have low seniority, defined as less than five years' service in their current organisation. Fourthly, the fifth EWCS questioned workers on the possibility that they might lose their job and how they would evaluate their capacity to find an equivalent one, and the results indicated that there is much insecurity on this point among women in the age groups 40–44 and 45–49, whereas similar insecurity is seen among men between 45–49 and 50–54.

Chapter 3 combined the four different dimensions of work by means of a multiple correspondence analysis, and the main findings were that overall differences in working conditions between groups 15 years before or after the age of 40 are not very important. A clear age effect becomes visible from the age of 55 onwards: all salaried workers in the age categories of 50–54 and over 55 seem to be increasingly less concerned by time constraints and by problems of work–life balance, as well as by physical demands. However, there is no evidence that older workers would naturally lose their ability over time (the 'deficit model' of ageing), but rather that the ageing process is a combination of decline of some functions and the creation of new resources. Moreover, it is important to remember that respondents in the fifth EWCS are at work and do not include those who have left the workforce.

Eight key indicators were selected for further analysis in the subsequent chapters, as these were seen as most representative of the link between age and working conditions: shift or night work, tiring or painful positions, working to tight deadlines, poor fit of work with external commitments, little latitude at work, little social support, and feelings of job insecurity.

Chapter 4 examined the issues of health, well-being and satisfaction with working conditions, attempting to assess the impact of these factors on workers and, specifically, on older workers.

In terms of health, the perception that their health is poor has the same profile for men and women, and it peaks for those aged between 55 and 59 before starting a downward trend in older groups. This does not mean that workers' state of health is getting better, only that the proportion of those among older groups who declare that their health is poor decreases, possibly because a proportion of those who face health difficulties have left the workforce.

Chapter 4 looked at the proportion of respondents dissatisfied with working conditions, by occupation, by gender and by age focussing on those aged over 40. Unsurprisingly, dissatisfaction with working conditions is more widespread in low-skilled occupations, for both sexes. The higher proportion for men is at the end of their 40s, with 26.9% dissatisfied, whereas for women it is at the beginning of their 50s, at 30.2%.

The fifth EWCS allows the analysis of an indicator of mental well-being (the WHO-5 Index). For men, two occupational groups (professionals and managers, and mid-skilled service workers) show a peak in the proportion with low well-being in the mid-40s, followed by a downward trend among older groups. For the other occupational groups, the peak comes five years later. Among women, technicians and associate professionals show a rising trend from the age of 40 to the end of the 50s, increasing from 14.2% to 30.1% between the ages of 40 and 59. For female mid-skilled workers and professionals and managers, the peak in the proportion having low well-being is at the beginning of the 50s. For the two remaining occupational groups, the peak is five years earlier.

The data shows links between self-evaluated health and age when one compares workers aged 55–59 and those aged 50–54, and by occupational category. Poor self-evaluated health is particularly frequent among manual and low-skilled older workers. In the age category 40–49 years, for both men and women, poor balance between working hours and non-working hours, painful positions and absence of career advancement all have an important influence on self-evaluated health, together with low social support. Nevertheless, older workers' satisfaction with working conditions is sensitive to the same work characteristics as that of younger workers.

Chapter 5 analysed the attitude of older workers towards work sustainability. The central question here is whether older workers consider that they will be able to work until the age of 60 and beyond. First, the relationship between perceived health challenges at work and changes with age was examined. The percentage of men and women who declare that their health is at risk because of work is the highest for the age group 50–54. After this peak, the percentage decreases significantly. Among salaried workers, 28.8% of those aged 50 to 54 and 27.3% of those aged 55

to 59 declare that their work affects their health negatively. Occupational categories are obviously associated with effects on health. The most significant change in health concerns for both sexes is among mid-skilled manual workers, where the proportion of workers in unhealthy situations at work decreases considerably after the age of 54. For the other occupations, results are not as clear.

The beginning of the 50s is a critical time in a working life since it is a period when many decisions are taken or preparations made for professional mobility, but also for potential early retirement. Overall, 33.7% of workers aged 50 to 54 do not think that they will be able to do the same job until the age of 60. The proportion is considerably higher for low- and mid-skilled workers, particularly among women.

As for working time, research demonstrates that the wish to leave the labour market early is also due to a desire for free time and the search for reconciling occupational and private obligations. As a whole, 28.6% of those aged 50 to 54 and 29.1% of those aged 55 to 59 would like to work less. Among older workers, the main reasons for an intention to work less or to retire earlier are often the fact of being tired, a need for more time for the family, or deteriorating health.

These four variables – health at risk because of work, work affecting health negatively, belief that one will not be able to do the same job at age 60, and wish to work less – can be considered as four possible 'markers' of potential intention to leave the labour market as soon as possible. Therefore the study analysed the links between these four variables and different features of work situations to see how the latter influence the intention or capacity of workers over 50 to remain in the current job. The analysis of the data indicates that, for both men and women, the feeling of health being at risk appears less widespread in the 55–59 group compared to the 50–54 group. This may be because employees who felt that their health was at risk ceased working sooner than the others. When one considers the characteristics of work situations, exposure to tiring or painful positions has a major effect on the feeling of their health being at risk among the 50–59 group. Apart from physical strains, the most significant factor seems to be shift work or night work. Every other item in this analysis also has significant effects, except for job insecurity among women. Similar results were found for in relation to work affecting health negatively.

The analysis showed that, when asked whether they think that they will be able to do the same job when 60, employees aged 55 to 59 are more likely to answer yes. This is not a surprise, for two reasons. One is that the 'finishing line' mentioned in the question is closer when respondents are aged 55 or more. The other probable reason is that many of the employees who would feel unable to continue

have actually stopped work before this age. Occupational category plays a role. Low-skilled workers, and even more mid-skilled manual workers, are significantly more likely to feel unable to do the same job when 60.

In relation to the wish to work less, there is no significant difference between the 50–54 and 55–59 age groups. As for occupational categories, managers and professionals appear to be most likely to want to work less, which could be associated with the fact that their working time is relatively high overall. When looking at the characteristics of the work situation, the desire to work less is most strongly associated with working hours not fitting well with home life. Working in tiring or painful positions and weak social support also had an effect.

Finally, in Chapter 6, the working conditions of the ageing workforce were compared across countries of the European Union. Comparing two groups of workers, those aged 40 to 49 and 50 to 59, the multiple correspondence analysis confirmed, first, that working conditions for older workers vary from one country to another. Secondly, there are differences between the two age groups in all countries. Nevertheless, the country effect is a key factor in determining working conditions for the two age groups, and it is within the specific situation in a given country that there are slight differences between age groups.

Chapter 6 also considered issues of health, well-being and satisfaction with working conditions of older workers in the 27 Member States of the European Union. The largest difference in self-reported health emerges between the 40–49 and 50–59 age groups, more often perceived

as poor by the older group, and is significant in most of the countries.

Also unsurprisingly, the proportion of workers reporting that they will be able to do the same job when older varies significantly from one country to another, with gender differences across countries.

Country comparisons indicate that some countries share a set of conditions perceived as not sustainable by older workers; in these countries, employment rates start decreasing significantly between the 45–49 and 50–54 age groups, and continue to fall thereafter. Workers over 50 more often declare themselves unsatisfied with working conditions and say that their working conditions are more difficult than elsewhere. At the other end of the spectrum are countries with the opposite profile: the decline in employment rates is rather smooth between the 40–49 and 50–59 age groups and a sharp drop is only apparent after the age of 60. In these countries, workers at all ages display a higher degree of satisfaction, and say their working conditions are more favourable.

However, remaining at work in a given country does not only depend on the quality of working conditions, but also on numerous other factors. Some are individual variables such as health, qualification level and income, but others are institutional and economic variables that characterise a given country, such as pension regime, taxation regime, poverty rate, and the structure of employment by occupations. Moreover, expectations regarding quality of life and stereotypes of older workers also depend on national contexts.

Gender, age and work sustainability

All across the report, the presentation of findings in tables and graphs distinguishes the situations of women and men, in accordance with the principle of gender mainstreaming. In Chapter 2, a gender perspective is also considered when older workers are characterised according to attributes such as occupation and employment status (part time or full time, public or private sector, and small or large workplaces). In Chapter 3, the multiple correspondence analysis reveals similar trend shapes for women and men in the evolution of work characteristics in relation to age, but with different positions in the graph (Figure 23): women are more significantly positioned towards ‘less painful’ and ‘fewer time constraints’ poles of the graph when older. Chapter 4 highlights some key factors associated with dissatisfaction with working conditions and deterioration of general health between 40 and 60 years of age: painful or tiring positions, poor fit between work and private life, bad career prospects, lack of social support at work. These factors are the same for women and men, but with gender differences in their respective degrees of importance. A similar conclusion can be drawn from the findings of Chapter 5 regarding work sustainability. Women in mid-skilled manual occupations and low-skilled occupations are more likely to be in unsustainable jobs, but some aspects of sustainability (health at risk because of work, a wish to reduce working hours) are of more concern for women in skilled occupations than men.

Examining together sets of variables on working conditions and pension regimes certainly constitutes potential work for further research. Further research could also focus on specific occupational categories where workers are more exposed to unsustainable work and where the temptation to leave work earlier is higher. In addition, better understanding of the explanatory factors that lead to the intention to leave, including working conditions but also, for instance, family situation, health and income, would bring new insights on decisions to remain at work when ageing.

In terms of policy implications, promoting healthy working conditions, as suggested by the European Commission (2011a), is clearly important, but the study also raises some more specific issues.

- ✎ Changes in work organisation and demographic evolution seem to reduce some existing ‘protective’ mechanisms that allowed older workers to be less exposed to painful working conditions. This raises challenges for work organisation in the context of an ageing workforce. The challenge is to prevent work from wearing out workers at all ages, and to avoid transferring the burden from the older to the younger.
- ✎ Recurrent factors explaining unsustainability of work when ageing are painful positions, poor reconciliation of working and non-working hours and bad career prospects. The first factor raises challenges in the area of health and safety regulation, ergonomics, and task distribution. The other two factors address human resource management, company organisation and the management of flexibility. A combination of approaches is needed: on the one hand, reducing exposure to risk of all workers by preventive measures; on the other hand, adjusting work organisation to the changing demography of the workforce.
- ✎ Work sustainability differs according to occupational groups. The study highlights factors relating to unsustainability not only for low-skilled occupations and mid-skilled manual occupations, but also for high-skilled occupations, particularly women among managers and professionals (including health and teaching professionals). Variety in occupational situations would need differentiated policy approaches.

Remaining at work in a given country does not only depend on the variables considered in this study, but also on various characteristics of socio-political, institutional and cultural models at the national level: income distribution, pension and tax regimes, quality of life and social representations of the elderly.

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Annex 1: The European Working Conditions Survey series

The European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS) is one of the few sources of information providing an overview of working conditions in Europe for the purposes of:

- assessing and quantifying working conditions of both employees and the self-employed across Europe on a harmonised basis;
- analysing relationships between different aspects of working conditions;
- identifying groups at risk and issues of concern, as well as progress made;
- monitoring trends by providing homogeneous indicators on these issues;
- contributing to European policy development on quality of work and employment issues.

The EWCS was carried out in 1991, 1995, 2000 (with an extension to the then-candidate countries in 2001 and 2002), 2005 and 2010. The growing range of countries covered by each wave reflects the expansion of the European Union. The first wave in 1991 covered only 12 countries, the second wave in 1995 covered 15 countries, and from the third wave in 2000–2002 onwards,

all 27 current EU Member States were included. Other countries covered by the survey include Turkey (in 2002, 2005 and 2010), Croatia and Norway (in 2005 and 2010), Switzerland (in 2005), and Albania, Kosovo, Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (in 2010).

The fifth EWCS

The fieldwork for the fifth EWCS was carried out between January and June of 2010.⁵ In total, 43,816 face-to-face interviews were carried out, with workers in 34 European countries answering questions on a wide range of issues regarding their employment situation and working conditions.

The target population consisted of all residents in the 34 countries aged 15 or older (aged 16 or older in Norway, Spain and the UK) and in employment at the time of the survey. People were considered to be in employment if they had worked for pay or profit for at least one hour in the week preceding the interview (ILO definition).

The scope of the survey questionnaire has widened substantially since the first wave, aiming to provide a comprehensive picture of the everyday reality of men and women at work. Consequently, the number of questions

⁵ Fieldwork continued until 17 July 2010 in Belgium, due to the extended sample size, and until 29 August 2010 in Norway, due to organisational issues.

and issues covered in the survey has expanded in each subsequent wave. By retaining a core of key questions, the survey allows for comparison over time. By using the same questionnaire in all countries, the survey allows for comparison across countries.

The main topics covered in the questionnaire for the fifth EWCS were job context, working time, work intensity, physical factors, cognitive factors, psychosocial factors, violence, harassment and discrimination, work organisation, skills, training and career prospects, social relationships, work–life balance and financial security, job fulfilment, and health and well-being.

New questions were introduced in the fifth wave to enable more in-depth analysis of psychosocial risks, workplace innovation, precarious employment and job security, pace of work, work–life balance, leadership styles, health, and the respondent’s household situation. The questionnaire also included new questions addressed specifically to self-employed workers (such as financial security). Gender mainstreaming has been an important concern when designing the questionnaire. Attention has been paid to the development of gender-sensitive indicators as well as to ensuring that the questions capture the work of both men and women. Revisions to the questionnaire are developed in cooperation with the tripartite stakeholders of Eurofound.

Sample

In each country, a multistage, stratified random sampling design was used. In the first stage, primary sampling units (PSUs) were sampled, stratifying according to geographic region (NUTS 2 level or below) and level of urbanisation. Subsequently, households in each PSU were sampled. In countries where an updated, high-quality address or population register was available, this was used as the sampling frame. If such a register was not available, a random route procedure was applied. In the fifth EWCS, for the first time, the enumeration of addresses through this random route procedure was separated from the interviewing stage. Finally, a screening procedure was applied to select the eligible respondent within each household.

The target number of interviews was 1,000 in all countries, except Slovenia (1,400), Italy, Poland and the UK (1,500), Germany and Turkey (2,000), France (3,000) and Belgium (4,000). The Belgian, French and Slovenian governments made use of the possibility offered by Eurofound to fund an addition to the initial sample size.

Fieldwork outcome and response rates

The interviews were carried out face to face in the respondents’ homes. The average duration of the interviews was 44 minutes. The overall response rate for the fifth wave was 44%, but there is considerable variation in response rates between countries, varying between 31% in Spain and 74% in Latvia.

Weighting

Weighting was applied to ensure that results based on the fifth EWCS data could be considered representative for workers in Europe.

- **Selection probability weights (or design weights):** To correct for the different probabilities of being selected for the survey associated with household size. People in households with fewer workers have a greater chance of being selected into the sample than people in households with more workers.
- **Post-stratification weights:** To correct for the differences in the willingness and availability to participate in the survey between different groups of the population. These weights ensure that the results accurately reflect the population of workers in each country.
- **Supra-national weights:** To correct for the differences between countries in the size of their workforce. These weights ensure that larger countries weigh heavier in the EU-level results.

Quality assurance

Each stage of the fifth EWCS was carefully planned, closely monitored and documented, and specific controls were put in place. For instance, the design phase paid close attention to information gathered in a data user survey on satisfaction with the previous wave and on future needs, and an assessment was made of how the survey could better address the topics that are central to European policymaking.

In order to ensure that the questions were relevant and meaningful for stakeholders as well as respondents in all European countries, the questionnaire was developed by Eurofound in close cooperation with a questionnaire development expert group. The expert group included members of the Foundation’s Governing Board, representatives of the European Social Partners, other EU bodies (the European Commission, Eurostat and the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work), international organisations (the OECD and the ILO), national statistical institutes, as well as leading European experts in the field.

Access to survey datasets

The Eurofound datasets and accompanying materials are stored with the UK Data Archive (UKDA) in Essex, UK and promoted online via the Economic and Social Data Service (ESDS) International.

The data is available free of charge to all those who intend to use it for non-commercial purposes. Requests for use for commercial purposes will be forwarded to Eurofound for authorisation.

In order to download the data, you must register with the ESDS if you are not from a UK university or college. For more information, please consult the ESDS page on how to access data.

Once you are registered, the quickest way to find Eurofound data is open the Catalogue search page, select **Data Creator/Funder** from the first drop-down list and enter in the words 'European Foundation' in the adjacent search box. Once Eurofound's surveys are listed, you can click on the name of the relevant survey for more information and download it using your user name and password.

For more information

The overview report as well as detailed information and analysis from the EWCS are available on the Eurofound website at www.eurofound.europa.eu. This information is updated regularly.

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Annex 2: Methodology and outline

Phase 1: Analysis of exposure to specific work characteristics at different ages

Phase 1 (presented in Chapter 3) describes and analyses the differentiated exposure of different age groups to various characteristics of work and employment. The purpose of this chapter is to explore and assess some forms of age-related selection mechanisms linked to work situations. To achieve this, the analyses made on the data of the fifth EWCS first relied on cross-tabulations between age (split into five-year brackets) and a broad list of indicators of working conditions. This first list of 'possible indicators' was structured under the five headings of the analytical model. These analyses have been carried out separately for men and women. On this basis, we then selected a final list of indicators, for which the nature of the relationship with age was investigated more deeply (Table A1). Then, in order to control possible structure effects in the sample, we developed multivariate regression models that included the independent variables of age, occupational categories, part-time work, and types of contract, while keeping the same dependent variable: the exposure to each working condition. Such a model allows the calculation of odds ratios and their confidence intervals.

After having examined the relations between age and various characteristics of work situations, taken one by one, we have built a multiple correspondence analysis (MCA), including as *active variables* all these indicators. Multiple correspondence analysis provides simplified presentations of a large set of variables, each of them being linked to the issue we study. The purpose is to examine the relative proximity between answers to different questions, or which are transformed into qualitative variables (for example, age brackets). These proximities are evaluated by calculating the associations actually observed, the 'co-occurrences' between modalities.

The purpose of the multiple correspondence analysis was to see how the selected work characteristics combine, and to gain a global view on the working conditions, considering all variables together.

The results of the multiple correspondence analysis also highlight several important features of work situations, which are inserted together in a multivariate regression model as *independent variables*, presented in Chapters 4 and 5 (see Table A2).

Table A1: List of indicators analysed in phase 1 and related questions from the fifth EWCS

Indicators	No.	Questions	Selected answers
Working conditions			
Work schedules	Q32 Q37f	Normally, how many times a month do you work at night, for at least 2 hours between 10pm and 5am? Do you work on shifts?	Regular night work: answer ≥ 5 times a month Answer yes
Physical risks	Q24a Q24c Q24b	Does your main paid job involve... Tiring or painful positions Carrying / moving heavy loads Lifting / moving people	At least half of the time At least half of the time At least quarter of the time
Aggressive factors in the work environment	Q23a Q23b Q23c Q23d Q23f Q23g Q23i	Vibrations Noise High temperatures Low temperatures Vapours of solvents or thinners Handling chemical products Materials that can be infectious	Presence of at least one factor at least a quarter of the time or Cumulative number of exposures at least a quarter of the time (1 to 7)
Psychosocial risks	Q24g Q51m Q51p	Handling angry clients You get emotionally involved in your work Your job requires that you hide your feelings	At least half of the time Always + most of the time Always + most of the time
Work intensity	Q45a Q45b Q46b Q51g	Working at very high speed? Working to tight deadlines? On the whole, is your pace of work dependent on direct demands from people? You have enough time to get the job done	At least half of the time At least half of the time Answer yes Answers never+ rarely + sometimes
Technological or organisational changes	Q15a Q15b	During the last 3 years have the following changes occurred at your current workplace which affected your immediate working environment? New processes or technologies Substantial restructuring or reorganisation	Answer yes Answer yes
Reconciliation of working and non-working time			
Changes in the work schedules	Q40	Do changes to your work schedule occur regularly?	Regular changes: all answers yes
Fitting of work with external commitments	Q41	In general do your working hours fit in with your family or social commitments outside work?	Problems of conciliation: (work-life balance) answers not very well + not well at all
Possibility to take informal arrangements	Q43	Arranging to take an hour or two off during working hours to take care of personal or family matters is...?'	Difficulties of informal arrangements: answers somewhat + very difficult
Expressive dimension of work			
Learning new things in work	Q49f	Does your job involve learning new things?	Job not involving learning new things
Latitude at work	Q50 abc	Are you able to choose to change your order of tasks / your methods of work / your speed or rate of work? (Answers yes or no)	Constructed indicator: weak latitude if at least 2 answers 'no'
Social support at work	Q51 ab	Your colleagues / your manager help and support you (answers on a 5-points scale from 1=always to 5=never)	Constructed indicator: scores are added; weak social support if added scores ≥ 6 .
Ability to apply own ideas in work	Q51i	You are able to apply your own ideas in your work	Little ability: answers sometimes + rarely + never
Access to training	Q61a	Over the past 12 months, have you undergone a training paid or provided by your employer to improve your skills?	No access to training: answer no
Prospects for career advancement	Q77c	My job offers good prospects for career advancement	Poor prospects: answers disagree + strongly disagree

Indicators	No.	Questions	Selected answers
Socioeconomic conditions			
Type of contracts	Q7	Distinction indefinite / all other types	All answers other than indefinite contract
Part-time work	Q18	Distinction full-time / part-time work	Weekly working hours \leq 34
Seniority in the current organisation	Q12	How many years have you been in your company or organisation?	(Only for 40+ workers)
Job security	Q77af	I might lose my job in the next six months If I were to lose or quit my current job, it would be easy for me to find a job of similar salary	Might lose: answers agree + strongly agree Easy to find: answers disagree + strongly disagree

Table A2: List of indicators inserted together in a multivariate regression model and related questions from the fifth EWCS

Indicators	No.	Questions	Selected answers
Working conditions			
Work schedules	Q37f Q32	Do you work on shifts? How many times a month do you work at night?	Answer yes Answer \geq 5 nights
Physical risks	Q24a	Does your main paid job involve tiring or painful positions?	At least half of the time
Work intensity	Q45b	Does your work involve working to tight deadlines?	At least half of the time
Reconciliation working / non-working time			
Fitting of work with external commitments	Q41	In general do your working hours fit in with your family or social commitments outside work?	Problems of conciliation answers not very well + not well at all
Expressive dimension of work			
Latitude at work	Q50 abc	Are you able to choose to change your order of tasks / your methods of work / your speed or rate of work? (Answers yes or no)	Constructed indicator: weak latitude if at least 2 answers 'no'
Social support at work	Q51 ab	Your colleagues / your manager help and support you (answers on a 5-points scale from 1=always to 5=never)	Constructed indicator: scores are added; weak social support if added scores \geq 6.
Prospects for career advancement	Q77c	My job offers good prospects for career advancement	Poor prospects: answers disagree + strongly disagree
Socioeconomic conditions			
Job security	Q77af	I might lose my job in the next six months If I were to lose or quit my current job, it would be easy for me to find a job of similar salary	Might lose: answers agree + strongly agree Easy to find: answers disagree + strongly disagree

Phase 2: Analysis of the effect of specific aspects of work situations on older workers

Phase 2 (presented in Chapter 4) analyses how ageing workers, in comparison with younger age groups, assess their well-being or otherwise according to their working situation. This phase focuses on how ageing workers feel at work. It includes both descriptive and assessment indicators that cover health, well-being and satisfaction with working conditions, as dependant variables (Table A3). The ‘independent variables’ are those of Table A2, which were selected on the basis of the multiple correspondence analysis. A multivariate regression model will examine the links, often interpreted as causal (Costa et al, 2005), between work situations, on the one hand, and health, well-being and work satisfaction of older workers, on the other hand.

Phase 3: Analysis of the impact of work situations on older workers’ attitudes to working longer

Phase 3 (presented in Chapter 5) investigates the consequences of differentiated exposure and differentiated assessment of well-being for the attitudes of older workers about the sustainability of their own job. The purpose of this phase is to identify those ageing workers who are more or less exposed to distant or potential ‘exit’ behaviours. These include those who think they will not be able to continue working longer; those who consider that their health is at risk because of work; those who want to work less (dependent variables in Table A4). This analysis leads to conclusions concerning the perceived sustainability of work among ageing workers. In Chapter 5, a multivariate regression model is also applied with the same independent variables as in Chapter 4.

Table A3: Dependent variables in phase 2 and related questions from the fifth EWCS

Indicators	No.	Questions
Health in general Physical health Psychological health	Q68 Q69c Q69m	How is your health in general? Over the last 12 months did you suffer from backache? Over the last 12 months did you suffer from insomnia?
Satisfaction with working conditions	Q76	On the whole, are you very satisfied (...) not at all satisfied with working conditions in your main paid job?
Psychological well-being	EF4	WHO-5 Index of Mental Well-Being ⁶

Table A4: Dependent variables in phase 3 and related questions from the fifth EWCS

Indicators	No.	Questions
Work and health	Q66 Q67	Do you think your health and safety is at risk because of your work? Does your work affect your health or not?
Work sustainability	Q75	Do you think you will be able to do the same job you are doing now when you are 60 years old?
Time preference	Q18 Q19	How many hours do you usually work per week in your main paid job? How many hours would you prefer to work at present?

⁶ The five questions (EF4) used by the WHO-5 Index assess positive mood (good spirit, relaxation), vitality (being active and waking up fresh and rested), and general interest (being interested in things). The answers score from 5 to 25. Levels below 13 indicate poor mental well-being. See www.who-5.org for more information.

Annex 3: Multiple correspondence analysis variables

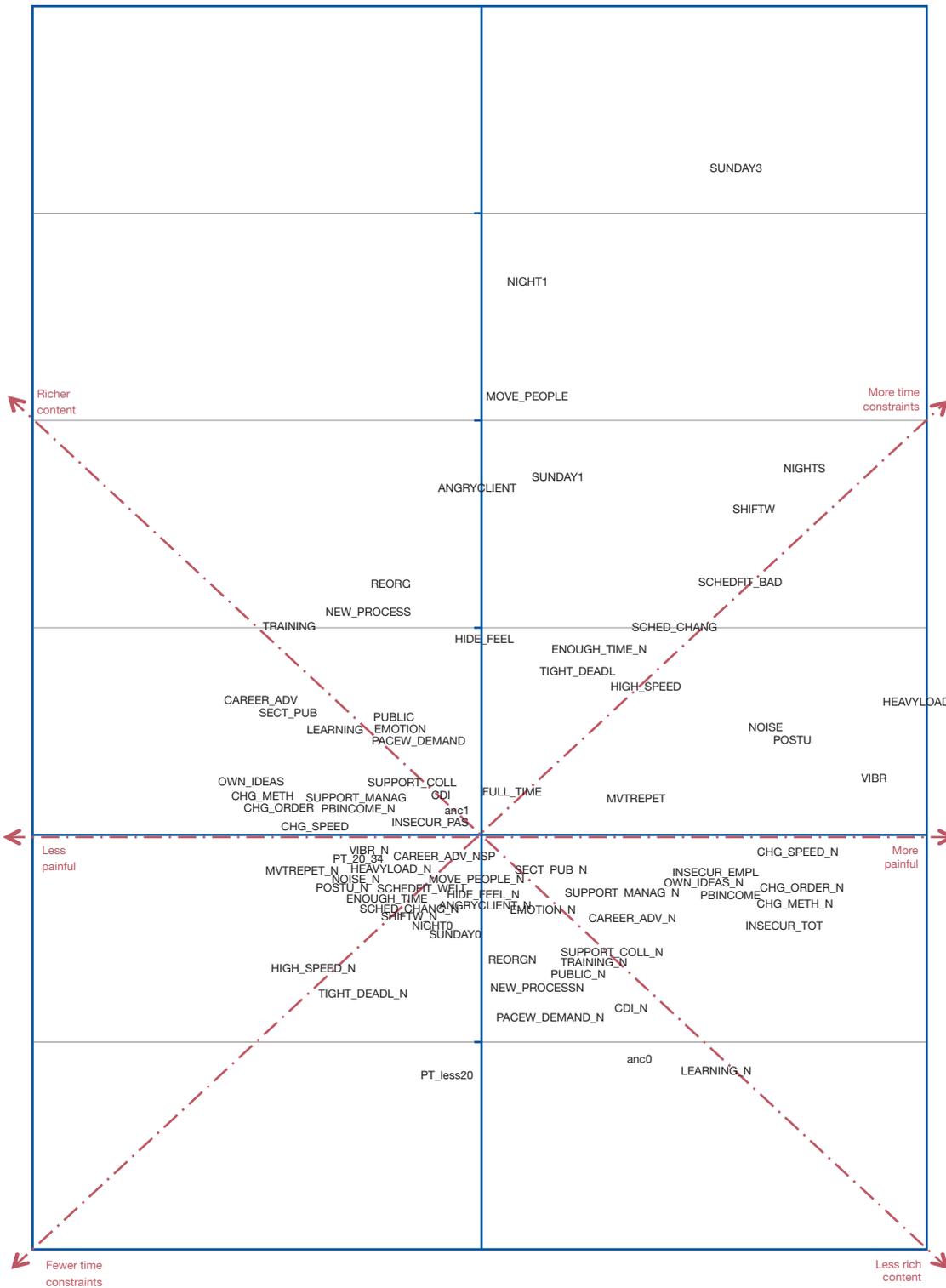
Variables used in the multiple correspondence analysis

NIGHT1	Work at night : 1 to 4 nights a month
NIGHT5	Work at night : at least 5 nights a month
NIGHT0	Work at night : Never
SUNDAY1	Work on Sundays : 1 or 2 times a month
SUNDAY3	Work on Sundays : at least 3 times a month
SUNDAY0	Work on Sundays : never
SHIFTW	Shift work
SHIFTW_N	No shift work
SCHED_CHANG	Change of work schedule occurs regularly : yes
SCHED_CHANG_N	Change of work schedule occurs regularly : no
SCHEDFIT_BAD	Working hours fit not at all well or not very well with family or social commitment
SCHEDFIT_WELL	Working hours fit well or very well with family or social commitment
ANGRYCLIENT	Handling angry clients at least 1/4 of the time
ANGRYCLIENT_N	Not 'Handling angry clients at least 1/4 of the time'
HIGH_SPEED	Job involve working at very high speed at least 1/2 of the time
HIGH_SPEED_N	Not 'Job involve working at very high speed at least 1/2 of the time'
TIGHT_DEADL	Job involve working to tight deadlines at least 1/2 of the time
TIGHT_DEADL_N	Not 'Job involve working to tight deadlines at least 1/2 of the time'
PACEW_DEMAND	Pace of work depends on direct demand
PACEW_DEMAND_N	Pace of work does not depend on direct demand
EMOTION	Get emotionally involved in your work always or most of the time
EMOTION_N	Not 'Get emotionally involved in your work always or most of the time'
HIDE_FEEL	Job requires you hide your feelings always or most of the time
HIDE_FEEL_N	Not 'Job requires you hide your feelings always or most of the time'
PUBLIC	Dealing directly with people not employed at your workplace (customers, passengers, pupils...) at least 1/4 of the time
PUBLIC_N	Not 'Dealing directly with people not employed at your workplace (customers, passengers, pupils...) at least 1/4 of the time'

PT_less20	Part-time work < 20h
PT_20_34	Part-time work 20h-34h
FULL_TIME	Full-time work
CDI	Employment contract : 'indefinite'
CDI_N	Employment contract : not 'indefinite'
SECT_PUB	Public sector
SECT_PUB_N	Not 'public sector'
anc0	Less than 1 year in the company or organisation
anc1	Not 'Less than 1 year in the company or organisation'
PBINCOME	Household able to make ends meet with difficulty or great difficulty
PBINCOME_N	Not 'Household able to make ends meet with difficulty or great difficulty'
INSECUR_TOT	Might lose job in the next 6 months and not easy to find another of similar salary
INSECUR_EMPL	Might lose job in the next 6 months and easy to find another of similar salary
INSECUR_PAS	Not Might lose job in the next 6 months
VIBR	Vibrations from hand tools, machinery... at least 1/4 of the time
VIBR_N	Not 'Vibrations from hand tools, machinery... at least 1/4 of the time'
NOISE	Noise so loud that you have to raise your voice to talk to people at least 1/4 of the time
NOISE_N	Not 'Noise so loud that you have to raise your voice to talk to people at least 1/4 of the time'
POSTU	Tiring or painful positions at least 1/2 of the time
POSTU_N	Not 'Tiring or painful positions at least 1/2 of the time'
MOVE_PEOPLE	Lifting or moving people at least 1/4 of the time
MOVE_PEOPLE_N	Not 'Lifting or moving people at least 1/4 of the time'
HEAVYLOAD	Carrying or moving heavy loads at least 1/2 of the time
HEAVYLOAD_N	Not 'Carrying or moving heavy loads at least 1/2 of the time'
MVTREPET	Repetitive hand or arms movements at least 1/4 of the time
MVTREPET_N	Not 'Repetitive hand or arms movements at least 1/4 of the time'
LEARNING	Job involves learning new things
LEARNING_N	Job does not involve learning new things
CHG_ORDER	Able to choose or change order of tasks
CHG_ORDER_N	Not able to choose or change order of tasks'
CHG_METH	Able to choose or change methods of work
CHG_METH_N	Not able to choose or change methods of work '
CHG_SPEED	Able to choose or change speed or rate of work
CHG_SPEED_N	Not able to choose or change speed or rate of work
ENOUGH_TIME	Enough time to get the job done always or most of the time
ENOUGH_TIME_N	Not 'Enough time to get the job done always or most of the time'
OWN_IDEAS	Able to apply your own ideas in your work always or most of the time
OWN_IDEAS_N	Not 'Able to apply your own ideas in your work always or most of the time'
NEW_PROCESS	New process or technologies introduces during the last 3 years
NEW_PROCESSN	Not 'New process or technologies introduces during the last 3 years'
REORG	Substantial restructuring or reorganisation during the last 3 years
REORGN	Not 'Substantial restructuring or reorganisation during the last 3 years'
TRAINING	Training paid or provided by employer over the last 12 months
TRAINING_N	No training paid or provided by employer over the last 12 months
CAREER_ADV	Job offers good prospects for career advancement (strongly agree or agree)

CAREER_ADV_N	Job offers good prospects for career advancement (strongly disagree or disagree)
CAREER_ADV_NSP	Job offers good prospects for career advancement (neither agree or disagree)
SUPPORT_COLL	Colleagues help and support you always or most of the time
SUPPORT_COLL_N	Not 'Colleagues help and support you always or most of the time'
SUPPORT_MANAG	Manager helps and supports you always or most of the time
SUPPORT_MANAG_N	Not 'Manager helps and supports you always or most of the time'

Figure A1: Full distribution of working conditions variables



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Achieving work environments that make work sustainable over a lifetime is a key facet of the promotion of longer working lives. This study considers the dimensions of work that have proved essential to the understanding of work sustainability: working conditions; physical and psychological health; the expressive dimension of work; reconciliation of working and non-working time; and socioeconomic conditions. It examines the influence of these factors on how older workers perceive the sustainability of their work, taking account of differences between workers in terms of age, occupation and gender. In addition, the working conditions of the ageing workforce across Member States of the European Union are compared.



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