

LMF2.4: Family-Friendly Workplace Practices

Definitions and methodology

Workplace practices are key determinants of families' ability to reconcile work and family life. These practices are especially important for employees who do face constraints in access to public supports in the tax/benefit (e.g. PF1.1 to PF1.5), parental leave (PF2.1 to PF2.3) and childcare and out-of-school-hours (OSH) care systems (PF3.1 to PF4.3). Not all parents have access to family-friendly workplace measures to the same extent, and even if they have access to such support, they do not always feel comfortable with using it (PF2.2). In all, working schedules differ widely across and within economic sectors as well as countries.

OECD (2007) defines family-friendly workplace arrangements as those practices that facilitate the reconciliation of work and family life, and which firms introduce to complement statutory requirements. Family-friendly arrangements include: extra-statutory leave from work arrangements; employer-provided childcare, OSH-care, and elderly care supports and flexible working time arrangements. As childcare, parental leave support and part-time employment are considered elsewhere (LMF1.6 to LMF2.3); the focus here is on flexibility in working time arrangements that do not necessarily involve reduced working hours. For example, teleworking, working at home, and working a full-time working week at non-standard hours.

Flexibility in working time allows, for example, parents to adjust their working schedule to map with school and/or childcare centre hours. The extent to which flexi-time practices help workers balance work and family life is co-determined by the extent to which workers have control over these arrangements. In practice, flexible working schemes are primarily designed to address employer needs in the production process, and their use as reconciliation tool is determined by the extent to which employees can use these arrangements (for example, by working at home) to reflect their preferred working time schedule (Chung *et al.*, 2007); also flexi-time arrangements can be awarded occasionally (to meet urgencies) or on regular basis. Riedman *et al.* (2006) introduced the following categorization of four types of working time arrangements on basis of the opportunity to re-arrange working hours over time:

- Schemes that only allow the start and end times *to vary on the same day*, but not the total number of hours per day, and without possibility of accumulating credit or debit hours.
- Schemes that allow employees to accumulate credit or debit hours within certain limitations, over a long period of time (such as a week or a month); *it is not possible to "save" working hours to obtain full days off*.
- Schemes that allow employees *to take full days off* to compensate for accumulated credit hours.
- Schemes that allow credit hours *to be compensated for by prolonged periods of work, often within a year*; such schemes are referred to as "working time accounts" or "annualised working hours".

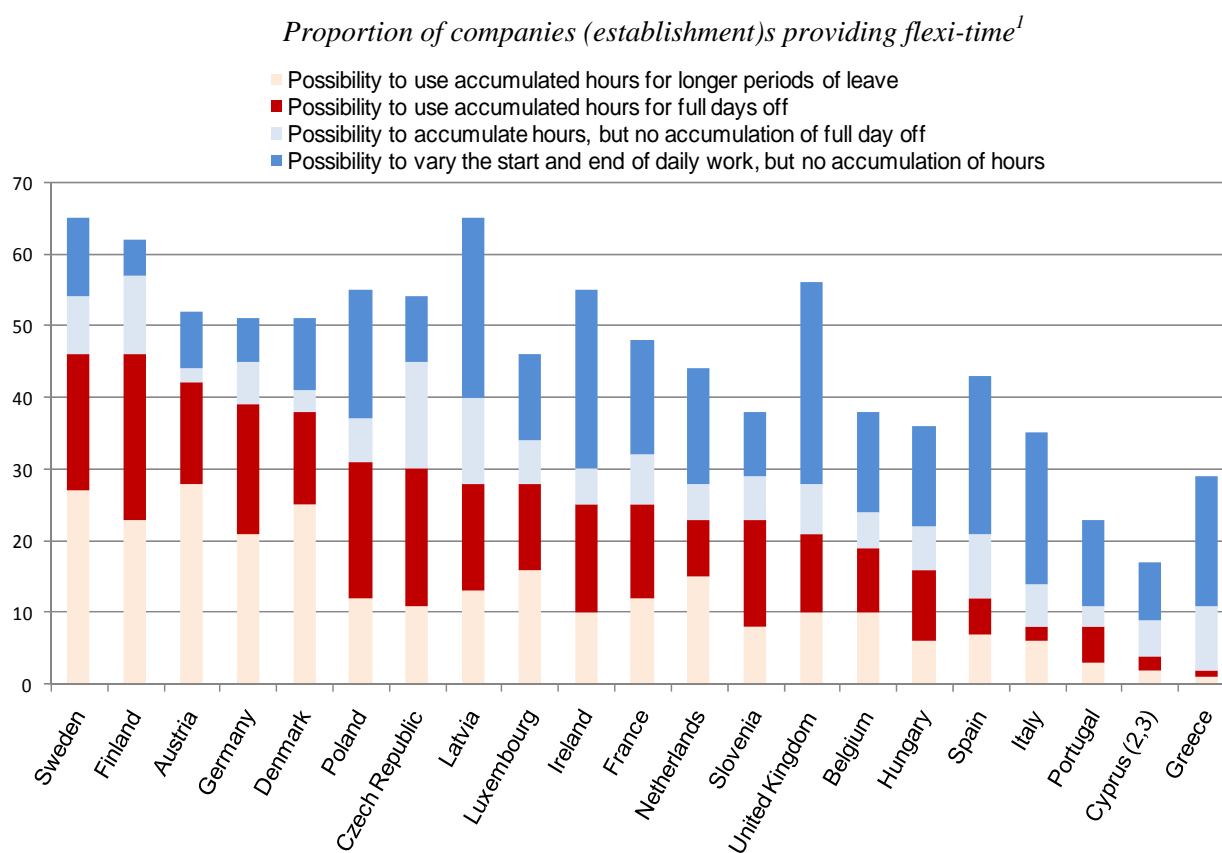
This indicator present information on the proportion of companies (establishments) which provide the flexible working time arrangements to their employees (Chart LMF2.4.A); the extent to which male and female employees have some sort of control over their working hours (Charts LMF2.4.B and LMF2.4.C); and, the incidence of working from home (Chart LMF2.4.D). There is no comprehensive information for European countries on the use of flexitime by employees. Data for OECD countries outside Europe include information on employers who provide flexi-time and employees who use it, but it is not directly comparable with information for the European countries.

Other relevant indicators: Key characteristics of parental leave systems (PF2.1); Additional leave entitlements (PF2.3); LMF6 Gender differences in employment outcomes; and, Distribution of working hours among adults in couple or single parent households (LMF2.2 and LMF2.3).

Key findings

Chart LMF2.4.A shows that Sweden, Finland, Austria, Germany and Denmark are the countries with the highest proportion of firms providing flexibility in working time arrangements. The percentage of companies providing flexi-time is also relatively large in Ireland or the United Kingdom, but in these countries flexibility is often limited to variance in working hours without the possibility to convert accumulated hours in holidays. In Greece and Portugal employers are least inclined to allow flexibility of working hours. Annex Table LMF2.4 provides summary information on the nature of flexible working time legislation across countries.

Chart LMF2.4.A: Incidence of employer-provided flexible working time arrangements



Countries are ranked by decreasing percentage of establishment allowing employees to either use accumulated hours for full days off or for longer period of leave.

1) Establishments with 10 or more employees; all economic sectors are covered, except for agriculture.

2) Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue";

3) Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission: The Republic of Cyprus is recognized by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Source: Establishment Survey on Working Time, 2004-2005 (management interviews), in Riedmann A., H. Bielski, T. Szczurowska, and A. Wagner (2006), *Working time and work-life balance in European companies*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Box LMF2.4.A: Information on flexible workplace practices in OECD countries outside Europe

Information on flexible workplace practices in OECD countries outside Europe is available from country surveys and contains information on employers who provide flexi-time and employees who use it. However, results are not directly comparable to the information for European countries in Charts LMF2.4.A to LMF2.4.D.

Flexible working time is an important feature of Australian workplace practices and in 2005, 41% of Australian Workplace Agreements (AWAs) among working parents facilitate flexible working hours (this was 44% of AWAs covering working mothers (Australian Government, 2006). According to the 1999-2002 Workplace and Employee Survey in Canada about 54% of female and 58% of male workers work in a company which avail of flexitime, with about 70% of workers using such schemes (Ferrer and Gagné, 2006 and OECD, 2007).

Flexitime options also exist in Japan, but generally without the possibility to accumulate overtime and take extra holidays in lieu. Collective labour agreements which facilitate arrangements whereby workers can decide autonomously when to clock into and out of work are present in 6.3% of Japanese workplaces; 17.5% of Japanese companies provide regular start and finishing hours outside the norm, while 46% of Japanese companies allow for flexible start and finishing times on an occasional basis (EIRO, 2008).

In New Zealand, the most commonly offered arrangements are flexible start and finish times on an occasional basis, permitted by 89% of employers to all or some of their employees according to the 2008 Employers Survey (DoL, 2008). Flexible start and finish times on a regular basis are available to some or all staff in 63% of workplaces.

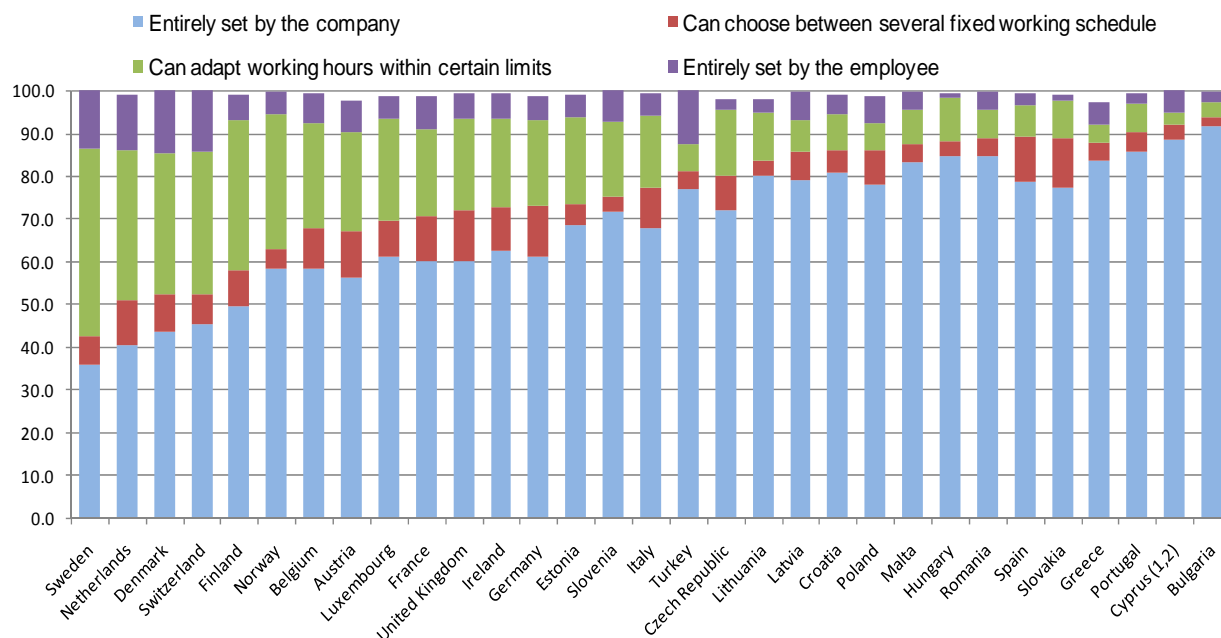
Similarly in the United States, 37% of employers with at least 50 employees allow most of their employees to vary the start and end of work periodically (Galinsky et al., 2008). Only 10% of employers grant it on a daily basis. Most of employees work in companies where flexitime schemes are available only to a limited number of employees: generally those in more senior positions. Women are less likely than men to have access to flexitime, but parents – including single mothers – are more likely to have access to workplace flexibility (Golden, 2001, 2006; McCrate, 2005).

Charts LMF2.4.B considers the proportion of employees who: (i) face working times entirely set by the company; (ii) can choose between fixed working schedules; (iii) can adapt working time within certain limits; and, (iv) are free to decide their own working hours. The extent to which employees have some control over their working time varies considerably across countries. Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Denmark and Finland are countries where many male and female employees often have at least some freedom in choosing their working hours. By contrast, the control of working time by employees is limited in Greece, Hungary and Portugal where more than 85% of employees report that working time is entirely fixed by the company.

Control over working time is likely to be related to the position of employees within companies, and more senior staffers are most likely to have access to flexible working time schedules. As men are more likely to be in senior positions than women (LMF1.6), they are likely to have more control over their working hours than women (Chart LMF2.4.D). Nevertheless, the proportion of working women with some control over their working hours is higher than for men in France, Hungary and Turkey. Although data is not strictly comparable, in 2008, 40% of New Zealand employees report having some flexibility in choosing when to work, while 54% of New Zealand employees report flexible start and finish time (DoL, 2008).

Chart LMF2.4.B: How working time arrangements are set

Proportion of employees having working time...



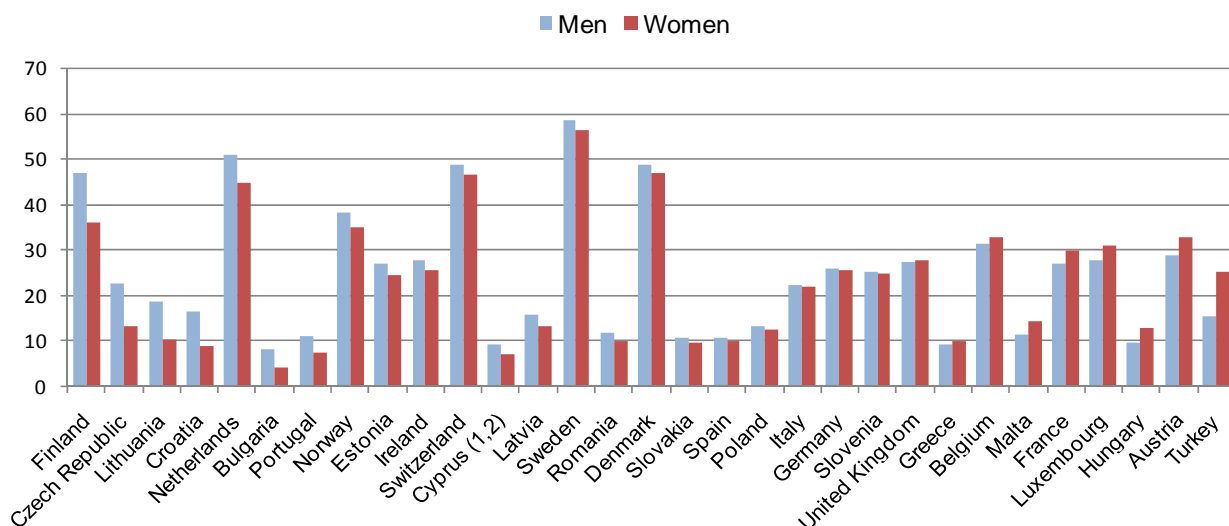
Countries are ranked by decreasing proportion of employees having some opportunity to adapt their working time.

1), 2) see notes 2) and 3) to Chart LMF2.4.A

Source: Fourth European Survey on Working Conditions, 2005.

Chart LMF2.4.C: Gender gaps in opportunities to change working hours, 2005

Proportion of male and female employees who can adjust and/or decide their working time



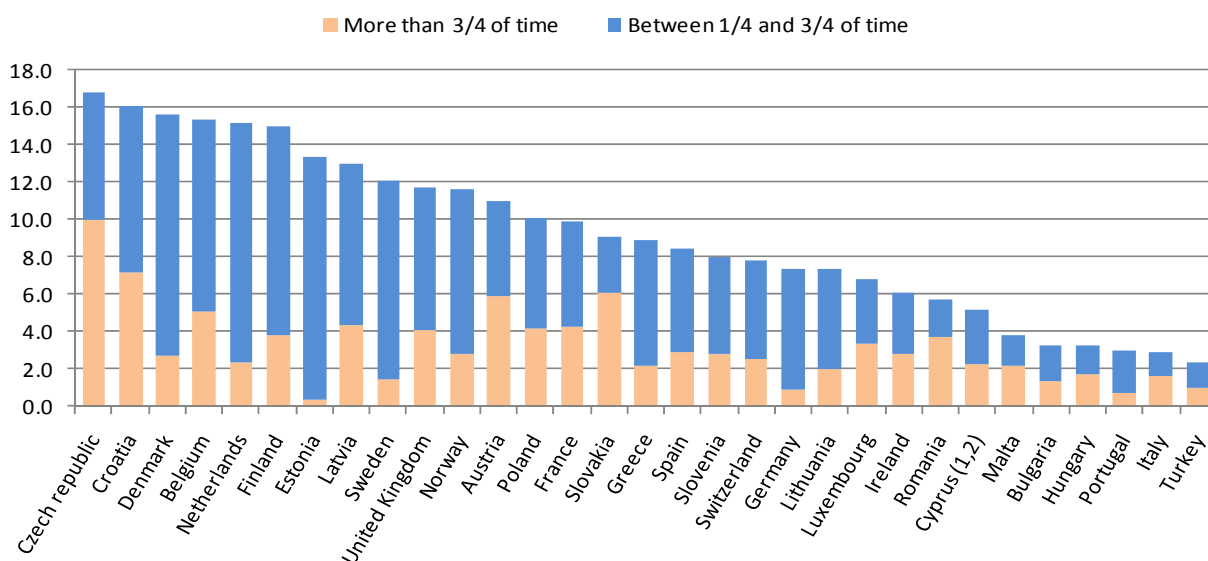
1, 2 see notes 2) and 3) to Chart LMF2.4.A

Source: Fourth European Survey on Working Conditions, 2005.

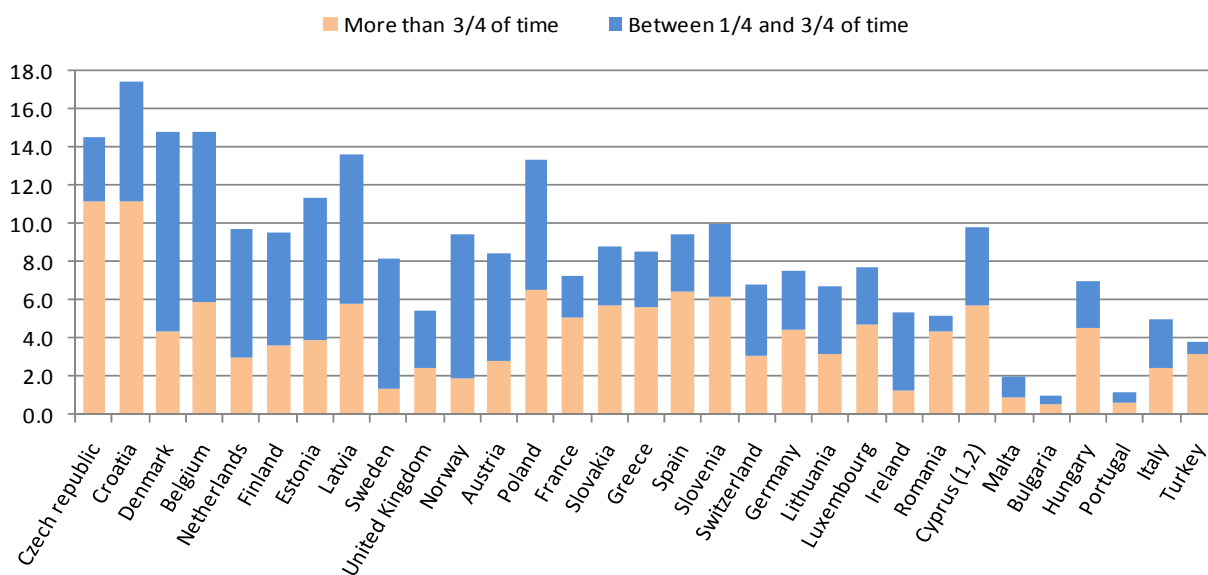
Working from home can also help workers match their work and family commitments. For EU countries, Chart LMF2.4.D presents the proportion of male and female employees who work from home by gender and by intensity (for at least ¼ of their time, with the distinction between those employees working at home between ¼ and half of their time and those who do so for at least ¾ of their working time). It emerges that about 15% of employees work from home on a regular basis in Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland and the Netherlands. By contrast, working from home is very rare in Italy, Hungary, Portugal or Turkey. Gender differences are generally small, but if men work at home, they are most likely to do so for at least a quarter of the week, while women are more likely to work at home for shorter periods (possible as part of a part-time job).

Chart LMF2.4.D: Working from home

Proportion of male employees working from home



Proportion of female employees working from home



Countries are ranked by decreasing proportion of men working from home at least ¼ of time.

1), 2) see notes 2) and 3) to Chart LMF2.4.A.

Source: Fourth European Survey on Working Conditions, 2005.

Directly comparable data is not available for non-European OECD countries, but home-based work is important in both Australia and New Zealand. In Australia, 13% of employees worked from home in 2005. In New Zealand, about 28% of male workers and 20% of female report to regularly work from another location, including homes but not exclusively (DoL, 2008). In Canada, working from home is far less frequent as only 5.6 % of female workers and 5.9% of male workers declare to do so for at least some hours of their regular schedule (Ferrer and Gagné, 2006). In the US, about half of employers allow some employees to work some regular paid hours at home occasionally and 23% on a regular basis, but it is unclear to what extent home-working opportunities are being used (Galinsky *et al.*, 2008).

Comparability and data issues

Indicators on family-friendly workplace supports is taken from different national surveys with different sample sizes, categorizations and questions for employers and employees (see for an overview of issues, Evans, 2001). Comparisons are therefore difficult, but some indicators on flexible working hours from national surveys have been summarized in Box LMF2.4.A.

For European countries, the *European Establishment Survey on Working Time and Work–Life Balance* (ESWT) 2004–2005 generated a cross-national dataset on the characteristics of workplace practices. The survey was based on sample of 21,000 establishments across approached through telephone interviews in both private and public companies across industry and service sectors in 21 European countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Slovenia, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The survey focused on a variety of working time arrangements, including flexible working hours, overtime, part-time work, work at unusual hours such as shift work, night work and weekend work, parental leave and other forms of long-term leave, and phased or early retirement. The survey response is largely based on interviews with personnel managers (e.g. human resources staff in companies). There is no guarantee that employees would have answered survey questions in the same way as personnel managers. Moreover, employs may, out of economic necessity, perceived negative career implications, or otherwise decide not to make use of the flexible workplace practices that are made available to them.

The *Fourth European Survey on Working Conditions* has been carried out by the European Foundation for the Employment of Living Conditions between September and November 2005. Almost 30,000 workers were interviewed in 31 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Spain, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. The survey considers the workforce by job-related characteristics, employment status and nature of contract, and individual and household characteristics of the respondent. In most countries, a sample of around 1,000 workers was interviewed. As sample sizes are similar, while the employer populations differ markedly across countries, the potential for error in sample-representativeness is much larger for the UK than for Belgium. Furthermore, in view of the relatively small sample size, cross-tabulations of working conditions across characteristics of households may not be robust, and such results (e.g. as presented in Table LMF2.4.C should be interpreted with caution.

Sources and further reading; Australian Government (2006), "Work and Family, The Importance of Workplace Flexibility in Promoting Balance between Work and Family", Paper prepared by the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, September; Chung H., M. Kerkhofs and P. Ester (2007), *Working time flexibility in European Companies*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions; DoL (2008), "Work-life balance and flexibility in New Zealand, A Snapshot of employee and employer attitudes and experiences in 2008", Department of Labour; EIRO (2008), "Working time in the EU and the other global economies – Industrial relations in the EU and the other global economies 2006-2007"; Evans, J. M., (2001), "Firms' Contribution to the Reconciliation Between Work and Family Life", Labour Market and Social Policy Occasional Papers, no. 48, OECD (www.oecd.org/els/workingpapers); Ferre A., and L. Gagné (2006), "The use of family friendly workplace practices in Canada", *IRPP Working paper 2006-02*; Galinsky S., J. Bond and K. Sakai (2008), *2008 National Study of Employers, The Families and Work Institute*, New York; Golden L. (2001) "Which Workers Get Flexible Work Schedules?" *American Behavioral Scientist*, 44 (7):1157-78; Golden L. (2006) "Working in Interesting Times: Three Flexibility Gaps for US Workers", *Congressional briefing on the Work and Family Bill of Rights*, May 11, 2006; Hardarson O. (2007), "The flexibility of working time arrangements for women and men", *Statistics in Focus*, 96, Eurostat; Hegewisch A. and J. Gornick. (2008), *Statutory Routes to Workplace Flexibility in Cross-National Perspective*, Insitute for Women's Policy Research; McCrate E. (2005), "Flexible hours, workplace authority, and Compensating wage differentials in the US", *Feminist Economics*, 11(1):11-39; OECD (2007), *Babies and Bosses: reconciling work and family life. A synthesis of findings for OECD countries*, OECD, Paris; Parent-Sloan Center on Aging Work (2008): *Measures that govern rights to alternate work arrangements in 2007*; Thirion A., E. Fernandez Macias, J. Hurley, and G. Vermeylen (2007), *Fourth European Working Conditions Survey*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions; and, Riedmann A., H. Bielenski, T. Szczurowska and A. Wagner (2006), *Working time and work-life balance in European companies*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions.

Annex Table LMF2.4: Summary information on legislation concerning family-related working time schemes, 2006/2007

<i>Country</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Statutory</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Employment and social protection</i>
Australia	Working time arrangements	No general statutory entitlement to part-time work or other change in working time. A statutory right to request changes in working arrangements for parents and carers will be introduced in 2010.	Case law has established that refusal to grant changed work arrangements to mothers establishes indirect sex discrimination Some states oblige employers to accommodate needs for alternative work arrangements in response to family responsibility.	National laws prohibit direct and indirect “discrimination based on family responsibility” in dismissal.
Austria	Reduced working hours	Working parents of children born after 1 July 2004 have a right to reduce working hours until the child’s seventh birthday, upon which the worker is entitled to increase hours to a full-time working week.	Limited to companies employing more than 20 staff, and the claimant must have been employed with the same employer for at least 3 years. All other parents can negotiate a reduction of working time until the child’s fourth birthday.	Protection against dismissal ends 4 weeks after the child’s fourth birthday. Part-time workers are eligible for prorated benefits
	Annualisation of hours	The introduction of annualised hours has to be regulated in a collective agreement..		
Belgium	Reduced working hours	Employees are entitled to reduce working hours by one-fifth (one day or two half days per week) for up to five years (6 years in public sector), or by half for one year. Each parent has right to 3 months full-time or 6 months part-time or 15 months at 80% of time for parental leave before child is 4 years old (8 if child is disabled)	All private sector employees (except managerial staff in companies with less than 10 employees) with minimum service of 12 months, as long as no more of 5% of total workforce are on “career break”. Firms with 10 or more employees (smaller firms: requires employer approval); employee must have been employed by firm of previous 15 months.	Part-time workers are eligible for prorated benefits The number of hours worked may not exceed normal limits by more than 65 hours, without immediate compensatory rest being granted
	Annualisation of hours	The number of hours worked may not exceed normal limits by more than 65 hours, without immediate compensatory rest being granted	Annualised hours permitted for technical or practical reasons or to cope with exceptional surge in work.	Flexible working week schemes normally require sectoral collective agreement

Annex Table LMF2.4: Summary information on legislation concerning family-related working time schemes, 2006/2007 (Contd.)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Statutory</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Employment and social protection</i>
Canada		No general statutory entitlement to part-time work or other modification of working time arrangements	A limited number of collective agreements provide for the reduction of working hours, flexitime, and job sharing.	
Czech Republic	Reduced working hours	Possibility of part-time employment for working parents with children under 15 and for pregnant women.	There is a legal requirement to take the needs of women caring for children into account when scheduling shift work.	
Finland	Reduced working hours	Possibilities of reduced working hours for working parents	From the end of parental leave until the end of the child's second year at school. Working hours are 30 hours per week at maximum, unless employer and employee agree otherwise..	
	Annualisation of hours	A collective agreement is usually required to exceed the statutory working time limit of 8 hours per day and 40 hours per week.		
France	Reduced working hours	Right to apply for a conversion of full-time to part-time, and of part-time to full-time hours, although there is no statutory entitlement (except for employees in the public sector who can work part-time for family reasons).	Request and refusal procedures and grounds for objection by employers must be stipulated in collective / enterprise level agreements. Applies to organisations with more than 20 employees.	
	Annualisation of hours	Collective agreement is required for the introduction of annualised working hours.		
Germany	Reduced working hours	Since 2001, every employee in a firm with at least 15 employees and an employment duration of 6 months has the right to demand a part-time job.	The employer has the right to reject the demand if the firm has no possibilities to change the work organisation. The part-time worker has no entitlement to return to full-time work.	
	Annualisation of hours	Collective or works agreements may establish a different reference period or extend hours beyond 10 a day in certain circumstance		

Annex Table LMF2.4: Summary information on legislation concerning family-related working time schemes, 2006/2007 (Contd.)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Statutory</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Employment and social protection</i>
Greece	Reduced working hours	Parents can reduce work by one hour less per day for up to 30 months after maternity leave	Applies to employees with 1 year of service, irrespective of size of employer; no tenure requirements in public sector. Mothers can reduce their working day by 2 hours until child reaches the age of 2, or 1 hour until the child turns 4 in the public and financial sectors.	
Hungary	Flexible working hours	Mothers are entitled to two one-hour breaks per day for breastfeeding until a child is 6 months old, and one break until the child is 9 months old.	Upon agreement with employer, the employee may work two hours less per day for the first year after maternity leave and one hour less per day for the next six months. In the public sector, a mother who is a civil servant is entitled to work 2 hours less per day until the child becomes 2 years old and one hour less when the child is aged from 2 to 4 years. Alternatively, she may choose to take 9 months continuous leave.	
Iceland	Flexible working hours	Employers are legally required to provide flexible arrangement for family reasons		
Ireland	Flexible working	No general statutory entitlement to part-time work or other modification of working time arrangement; but parental leave can be taken as reduced hours or in several blocks.		
	Annualisation of hours	Collective or individual agreement required to extend reference period from 4 to a maximum of 12 months.		

Annex Table LMF2.4: Summary information on legislation concerning family-related working time schemes, 2006/2007 (Contd.)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Statutory</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Employment and social protection</i>
Italy	Reduced working hours	Female employees entitled to work reduced hours.	For employees with parental responsibility for a child under 6 years or a disabled child under 18 years.	The employer must give consideration to requests by an employee to transfer from full-time to part-time; there must be appropriate reasons for refusal (these are, however, not specified in law).
	Annualisation of hours	Working time accounts for daily, weekly or annual flexibility.	Widespread introduction through collective agreements since 1999.	Collective or individual agreement required to extend reference period of working time from 4 to a maximum of 12 months.
Japan	Flexitime	Workers can decide autonomously, but within limits, when to clock into and out of work.	Workers have to guarantee the provision of a certain amount of working hours each month.	
	Annual flexible schedule	Can involve a maximum of 10 hours of work a day, and no more than 52 hours' a week.		
Korea	Flexible working time	The 2003 Labor Standards Act introduced in 2003 the 40-hour working week, that applies to all workplace with 50 employees or more.		
		Extended hours can be agreed within certain limits.	Others with a child under 1 year of age can be allowed to extend working hours for a maximum of 2 hours a day (6 hours per week), while other employees can extend working hours until a maximum of 12 hours. Pregnant women are not allowed to extend working hours.	
Lithuania	Reduced working hours	Part-time work may be established by agreement between the employee and the employer by decreasing the number of working days per week or shortening a working day (shilft).		

Annex Table LMF2.4: Summary information on legislation concerning family-related working time schemes, 2006/2007 (Contd.)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Statutory</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Employment and social protection</i>
Luxembourg	Reduced working time	No general statutory entitlement to part-time work or other modification of working time arrangement; but parental leave can be taken as reduced hours or in several blocks.		
	Annualisation of hours	Collective agreement (or ministerial authorisation in absence of agreement) required to extend reference period from 1 month to 1 year or more.		
Netherlands	Reduced working hours	Right to increase or decrease their working time.	For employees working in firms with more than 10 employees and with 12 months tenure. Employees can only submit a request once in two years and should have one completed year of continuous employment with the current employers.	Employer may only refuse reduction in hours if there are 'serious' business grounds (these have been defined by several court cases).
	Annualisation of hours	Rights to convert from/to part-time and to working time saving accounts were introduced in collective agreements from early 1990s.		
New Zealand	Reduced working time	The Employment relations Act 2000 sets working hours and provides the possibility of negotiating flexible working hours as part of collective agreements. An employee who has "the care of any person" has the right to request a variation of their working arrangements (change in number of hours; days of week; and location of work).	Employees with tenure of at least 6 months immediately prior to request and who has not made a request in last 12 months.	Refusal must be justified with reference to grounds for believing that for believing that employee is not eligible for request. Many collective agreements include the possibility of shifting to part-time work and other flexibility.

Annex Table LMF2.4: Summary information on legislation concerning family-related working time schemes, 2006/2007 (Contd.)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Statutory</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Employment and social protection</i>
Norway	Reduced working hours Annualisation of hours	Right to part-time work to care for children Individual employer-employee written agreement required for basic annualised scheme; collective agreement required for higher daily and weekly limits.	Until children are 10 years old. Parental leave can also be taken as part-time through 'time accounts', for a maximum of 2 years.	Employer should accommodate the wishes unless there are serious business or organizational reasons for refusal.
Poland	Reduced working hours	Since 2004, a shortened working week is possible for employees with the obligation of employer to consider employees' request to change their working time status.		
Portugal	Reduced working hours Annualisation of hours	Parents of children up to age 12 or with no age limit if disabled or chronically ill) are entitled to work part-time or to have flexible working hours. Employers has to inform employees wishing to move from full-time to part-time/part-time to full-time of suitable vacancies Leave to visit children school.	Possible for up to two years (three years if more than 2 children). Only one parent at the time. 4 hours per school term for parents with children under age 18.	Employer may refuse on business grounds or hard-to-fill vacancy but requires an opinion from the tripartite <i>Commission for Equality at Work and Employment</i> . No reduction of earnings

Annex Table LMF2.4: Summary information on legislation concerning family-related working time schemes, 2006/2007 (Contd.)

<i>Country</i>	<i>Scope</i>	<i>Statutory</i>	<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Employment and social protection</i>
Slovenia	Flexible hours	Breaks for breastfeeding mothers working full-time.		
	Reduced working hours	Right to work part-time for parents taking care of children below the age of 3 years, or 18 years if the child is disabled.	Working time must be equal or longer than half full-time.	
Spain	Reduced working hours	Reduction of working hours to take care for a dependant relative should be considered by the employer as far as possible.	Working day can be reduced by 1/8, a third or half of its normal duration to care for a child until the eighth year or to look after a disabled child.	Regional governments can also have some improved entitlements.
		Employers has to inform employees wishing to move from full-time to part-time/part-time to full-time of suitable vacancies.	Public employees of the central state can benefit from working time reduction until the child is 12 years and have guaranteed some working time flexibility to adapt to school hours. There are specific opportunities to work half time for central government employees.	
	Annualisation of hours	Collective agreement required for introduction of collective annualisation, though some individual employment contracts may allow for annualisation		
Sweden	Reduced working hours	Right to reduce the working time by up to 25%, as option for taking parental leave.	For parents of children below the age of 8 years or before they complete the first grade of school.	
		Possible unpaid reduction in hours for parents of children up to 2nd grade	Employees with at least 6 months tenure (or 12 months in last 24 months prior to birth)	Right to return to full-time job at the end of the period.
	Flexible working hours	Employer should accommodate employee wishes for reduced hours.	Employees with at least 6 months tenure (or 12 months in last 24 months prior to birth)	Derogations from working time rules generally allowed by collective agreements.

Annex Table LMF2.4: Summary information on legislation concerning family-related working time schemes, 2006/2007 (Contd.)

Country	Scope	Statutory	Criteria	Employment and social protection
Switzerland	Reduced working hours	No general statutory entitlement to part-time work or other modification of working time arrangement, but employer must take into account of an employee's family responsibility when setting work and rest times	Employees with children up to 15 or relatives in need of care.	
United Kingdom	Flexible/reduced working hours Annualisation of hours	From 2003, right to request for flexible working hours (change in number of hours; timing of hours; location of work; flexitime) and duty to consider from employer.	For employees with parental responsibilities of a child under 6 years or a disabled child under 18 years, or to care for an adult. Employees should have at least 26 weeks tenure and not having made a request within the 12 preceding months.	Employers may refuse only 'where there is a clear business ground for doing so'. Case law has established that refusal to grant changed work arrangements to women with children constitutes indirect discrimination. Collective agreement (or workforce agreement where unions not recognised) required to extend reference period up to 52 weeks. Workers may 'opt out' of 48-hour weekly limit.
United States	Reduced working hours	No general statutory entitlement but some unions have won the right to reduced working time on a temporary basis so that workers can take care of family needs.		The <i>Fair Labor Standard Act</i> guarantees part-time workers the minimum wage. No legal protections with regard to pay equity, benefits or job conditions

Source: EIRO (2008), Working time in the EU and other global economies – Industrial relations in the EU and other global economies 2006-2007, <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/studies/tn0804058s/tn0804058s.htm>; EIRO (2003), Annualised hours in Europe, <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/2003/08/study/tn0308101s.htm>; Moss, P. and M. Korintus (2008), International Review of leave Policies and related research 2006, DTI Employment Relations Research Series, No. 100, <http://www.berr.gov.uk/>; OECD (2007), *Babies and Bosses - Reconciling Work and family Life, A Synthesis of Findings for OECD Countries*; Plantenga J., Remery Ch. (2005), *Reconciliation of work and private life: a comparative review of thirty European countries*, European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs; Sloan Center on Aging Work (2008); Measures that govern rights to alternate work arrangements in 2007.