

Flexibility and Control: New Challenges for Working-Time Policy in the European Union

Steffen Lehndorff

ABSTRACT: This article gives a brief overview of recent working-time trends across European Union (EU) countries and the challenges for the working-time policy of the trade unions. The account highlights the growing difficulties of trade unions in many EU countries in maintaining their organisational strength, the interaction between these difficulties and the changing systems of collective bargaining around working-time, and the changes in both the duration and the structures of working time in terms of differentiation and flexibilisation. The latter add to the challenges faced by the unions, as more workplace-focused approaches to the representation of workers' working-time interests are required. A final consideration is given to the links between working time and the welfare state, which provides the most effective 'indirect' working-time regulation for women. The main conclusion from the overview is that future working-time policies of trade unions in most EU countries will have to be simultaneously more workplace-focused and more 'political'.

Introduction

In the course of the 'golden age' of capitalism in the second half of the twentieth century, working-time regulation became one of the major and most effective arenas of trade union action in many European countries, in particular those in the western and northern parts of the continent. The times are changing, however, and so are the institutional frameworks of working-time regulation and the trade union capacities that used to be the political cornerstone of these institutions. In what follows, I will give an overview of recent working-time trends across European Union (EU) countries and the major challenges for the working-time policy of European trade unions. Patterns and management of working-times, rather than just their length, are becoming increasingly important. The political implications

include the need for a more decentralised, in some cases even individualised, approach to the representation of workers' working-time interests, which may challenge the more traditional trade union policy approach. At the same time, and in a certain contrast to decentralisation trends, the links between working-times and the welfare state are becoming increasingly obvious and controversial, as more women are striving for equal opportunities in the labour market. In a nutshell, future working-time policies will have to be at the same time more workplace-focused *and* more 'political'.

Trade Unions and Collective Bargaining in the Enlarged EU

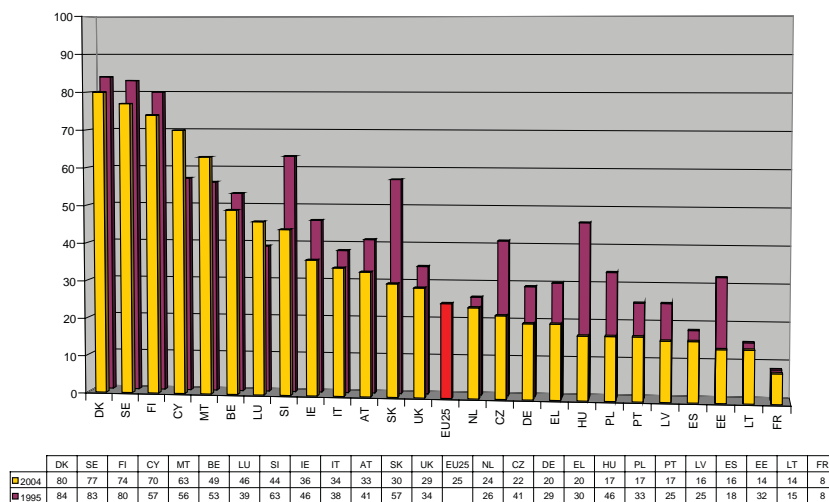
The institutional forms and settings of working-time regulation vary greatly across EU countries (Bosch, Dawkins and Michon 1994; Visser 2004). One obvious commonality, however, is the key importance of trade unions in the emergence and change of these institutions (Traxler, Blaschke and Kittel 2001). Given their role as the political anchors of collective bargaining institutions designed to impact on working-times, the gradual, in some cases severe, decline in union density in many EU countries cannot be without consequences.¹

True, absolute membership numbers are on the rise in some countries such as Spain, with a boost in labour-market participation rates. As for 'net' union density, however — that is, the membership numbers relative to the overall workforce — the picture is far from encouraging for trade union organisers (see Figure 1²). Union density across EU Member States ranges from 80 per cent in Denmark to eight per cent in France. Apart from Spain and France,³ it is striking that low union density is found in most new EU member countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Slovenia and Slovakia are the only Eastern nations with an above-average density rate.

As for the trend over time, union density is dropping in most but not all EU countries (Hyman 2001; Ebbinghaus and Visser 2004). Unions in Central and Eastern Europe in particular have been confronted with dramatic membership losses after the first phase of transition. Note that union performance is best in the Nordic countries well-known for their strong welfare state background.

Not surprisingly, trends in union density impact on collective bargaining over pay and working-time. A first observation is the trend towards a greater decentralisation of bargaining (Katz et al. 2004; Schulten 2005). However, it should be useful to distinguish between *decentralisation* and *fragmentation* of bargaining. In most of the 'old' EU countries, with the most prominent exception of the private industries in the United Kingdom, the most important bargaining level continues to be the sector (see Table 1 for the example of bargaining on wages). It is within this framework that a great deal of decentralisation is taking place in

Figure 1: Trade union density, EU-25, 1995–2004*



*'Net' union density is defined as the total figure of gainfully employed members (excluding unemployed, students or retired) divided by the total wage earners population of the country; EU-25: weighted average.
 For EU country codes see endnote 2.
 Source: Van Gyes et al. (2006)

most, though not all,⁴ countries. By way of example, Germany and the Netherlands have experienced growing shares of single-employer bargaining and local deviation bargaining over recent years in various forms (opening / hardship / opt-out clauses, 'local pacts' or 'area contracts'), which, at least in the German case, are evolving partly within the collective agreements and partly in conflict with them. In France, decentralisation has been explicitly fostered by state legislation on working-time. In Sweden, Finland and Portugal, however, decentralisation has evolved within a centralised bargaining system, thus giving rise to novel multi-level or even two-tier bargaining practices. In other words, the rise of decentralised bargaining can happen in a co-ordinated or complementary way with respect to bargaining at a higher level, but it can also replace or interfere with the latter. In contrast, in Central and Eastern Europe (except for Slovenia) the term 'decentralisation' would be misleading. In the wake of the transition period, fragmentation of bargaining prevails, due to weak and sometimes competing union and employer organisations, and due to weak bargaining institutions (Kohl and Platzer 2004).

Table 1: Levels of pay bargaining, EU-25

	Intersectoral *	Sector	Enterprise
AT		▲	□
BE	○	▲	□
CY		○	▲
CZ		□	▲
DE		▲	○
DK	□	▲	○
EE	□	□	▲
EL	○	▲	□
ES		▲	○
FI	▲	○	□
FR		○	▲
HU	□	○	▲
IE	▲	□	□
IT	□	▲	○
LT		□	▲
LU		○	○
LV	□		▲
MT		□	▲
NL	□	▲	□
PL	□	□	▲
PT	□	▲	○
SE		▲	□
SK		▲	○
SL	○	▲	○
UK		□	▲

- existing level of collective bargaining
○ important but not dominant level of collective bargaining
▲ dominant level of collective bargaining

*Tripartite or bilateral agreements

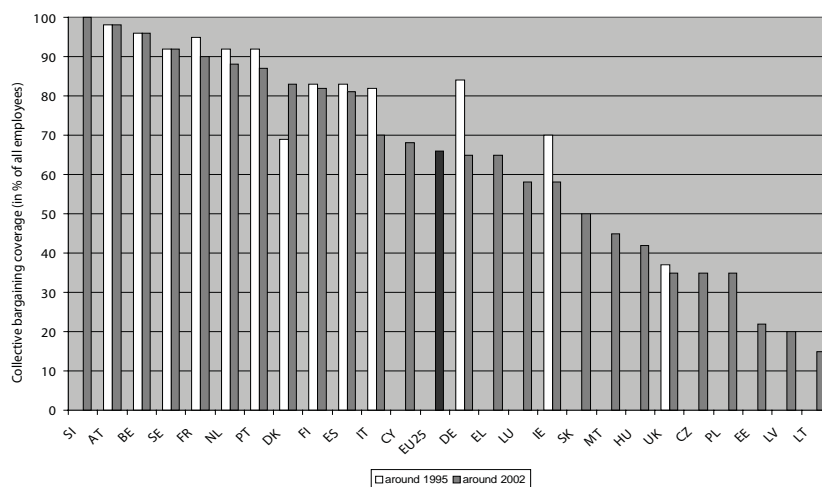
Source: Van Gyes et al. (2006)

Next to the *level* of bargaining, the *coverage* of collective agreements shows the greatest change. As highlighted by Figure 2, bargaining coverage varies widely across Europe. With the notable exception of Slovenia, whose bargaining system is very much influenced by the neighbouring Austrian example, the figure exhibits the overall divide between the bulk of the new and of the old (continental) member countries. Note that the differentiation amongst EU-15 countries is also considerable, as highlighted by the United Kingdom in particular.

As to the trend over time, bargaining coverage is declining in a majority of, but not all, EU Member States. Perhaps the most surprising example of stability in this respect is France, with one of the lowest union density rates and one of the highest bargaining coverage rates in Europe. The single most important explanation for this contrast is the presence of statutory extension procedures. Thus, in many EU countries government action continues to be crucial for a large-scale protection of workers.

It should be noted that, contrary to conventional wisdom, well-established collective bargaining systems may fit with overall economic performance and, more specifically, labour productivity in national economies, as is highlighted by Figure 3. Thus, in a more general and macroeconomic perspective, the economic advantages of fragmented bargaining systems are far from obvious.

Figure 2: Collective bargaining coverage, EU-25, 2002 and mid-1990s*



*numbers for around 1995 and 2002; EU-25 = Weighted average
Source: Van Gyes et al. (2006)

As will be argued, the need for stabilising, developing, or revitalising the systems of collective bargaining and the objective of getting working-time policy back on the agenda for collective bargaining may be regarded as two sides of one coin.

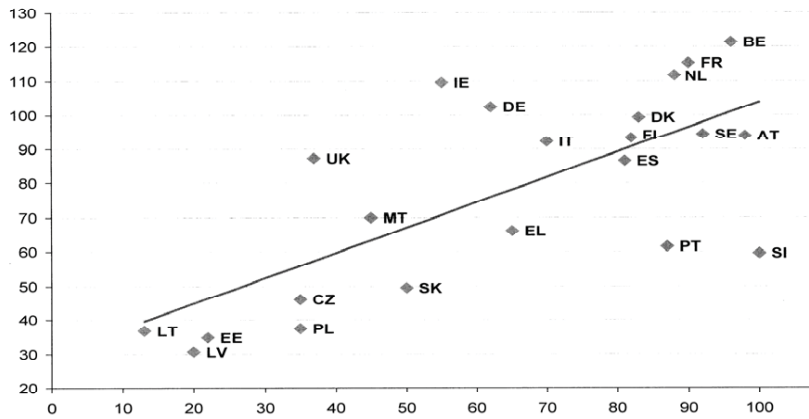
First Challenge: Working-Time as an Issue of Collective Bargaining

Next to pay, working-time was *the* subject of collective bargaining in Europe over the last century. While it is true that the content of bargaining issues has been expanded over the last decade, working-time issues are no longer at the forefront of industry-level bargaining campaigns (see Lehdorff 2000 for greater detail). That is, the level of working hours as agreed in multi-employer bargaining has remained unchanged in most EU countries over recent years. There are, nevertheless, some notable exceptions, including France (a statutory 35-hour week recently implemented by collective agreements for about half of the economy), the introduction of the 40-hour week in Portugal (statutory, followed by collective agreements), East Germany and some Central and Eastern European countries over the 1990s (Table 2). Another

example of recent working-time reductions worth mentioning is in Denmark, with its introduction of the sixth week of annual holidays.

As Table 2 also exhibits, the overall level of working hours in practice (that is, hours 'usually' worked per week by full-time employees) is higher than the level stipulated in collective agreements. Note that the UK long-hours culture continues to stand out by comparison with the rest of Europe, even following the EU enlargement.

Figure 3: Collective bargaining coverage and labour productivity per hour*



* x-axis: bargaining coverage in % of workers covered; y-axis: GNP (in purchasing power standard) per hour worked, EU-15 = 100
 Source: Eurostat structural indicators (for productivity); Van Gyes et al. (2006)

The gap between agreed and actual hours has widened in some countries, such as Germany, during the course of the 1990s. This has given rise to concerns about a possible turn towards gradual and general working-time extensions in the future. The data available, however, do not support such concerns for the whole of the workforce so far. While it is true that some categories of workers, in particular the more highly skilled, white-collar ones, may be forced or inclined to work longer hours, the most salient feature for countries such as Germany appears to be a certain coupling of average working hours to the business cycle. It is true that this may be regarded as a 'natural' thing to happen but it was not so common in the past, as trade unions succeeded in pushing for shorter standard working hours, thus forcing employers to resort to the hiring of more workers in phases of

cyclical upswing, rather than resorting to overtime hours in the first place (Bosch and Lehndorff 2001). This can be clearly seen when comparing the upswing periods in West Germany in the late 1980s and the late 1990s (Figure 4).

Table 2: Average hours collectively agreed and average hours usually worked per week (full-time employees), EU-25, 2005

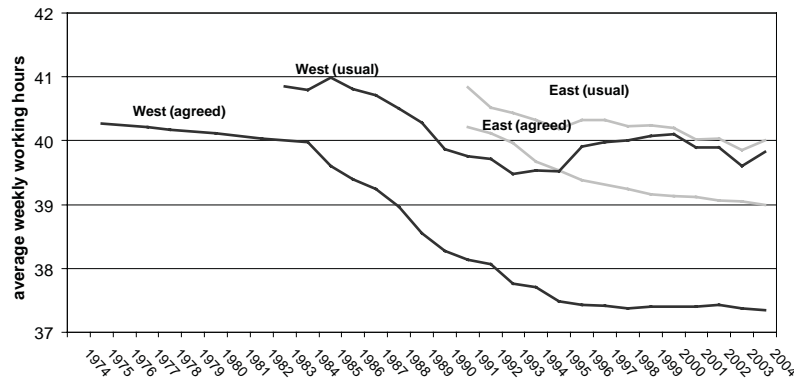
	Agreed	Usual	Men (usual)	Women (usual)
Austria	38.8	42.4*	43.1*	41.0*
Belgium	38.0	39.1	39.8	37.6
Cyprus	38.0	40.2	40.7	39.7
Czech Rep.	38.0	41.4	42.1	40.5
Germany	37.7	40.1	40.5	39.2
Denmark	37.0	39.4	40.4	38.0
Estonia	40.0	41.1	41.9	40.3
Greece	40.0	41.0	41.8	39.8
Spain	38.5	41.1	41.8	39.8
Finland	37.5	39.2	40.0	38.4
France	40.0	39.0	39.8	37.8
Hungary	40.0	40.7	41.3	40.1
Ireland	39.0	39.1	40.4	37.3
Italy	38.0	39.2	40.6	36.9
Lithuania	40.0	39.5	40.3	38.7
Luxemburg	39.0	40.2	40.3	39.9
Latvia	40.0	42.5	43.7	41.1
Malta	40.0	40.8	41.6	38.9
Netherlands	37.0	38.8	39.0	38.1
Poland	40.0	41.4	43.0	39.6
Portugal	38.3	40.2	41.0	39.1
Sweden	38.8	39.9	39.9	39.8
Slovakia	40.0	41.6	42.1	41.0
Slovenia	38.6	40.7	41.2	41.0
United Kingdom	37.2*	42.6	44.2	40.2
EU-25	38.6	40.4	41.3	39.1

*Data on usual working hours for Austria not comparable with other EU countries due to methodological changes in Labour Force Survey from 2004. Last comparable data in 2003 exhibited an average usual weekly working time of 40.0 hrs. (Source: ELFS/IAQ).

**Due to the demise of multi-employer bargaining, data on agreed working hours for the United Kingdom may have a public sector bias.

Source: EIROnline, *Employment in Europe 2006*

Figure 4: Evolution of average collectively agreed and actual regular weekly working times of full-time employees in the Federal Republic of Germany (in hours per week)

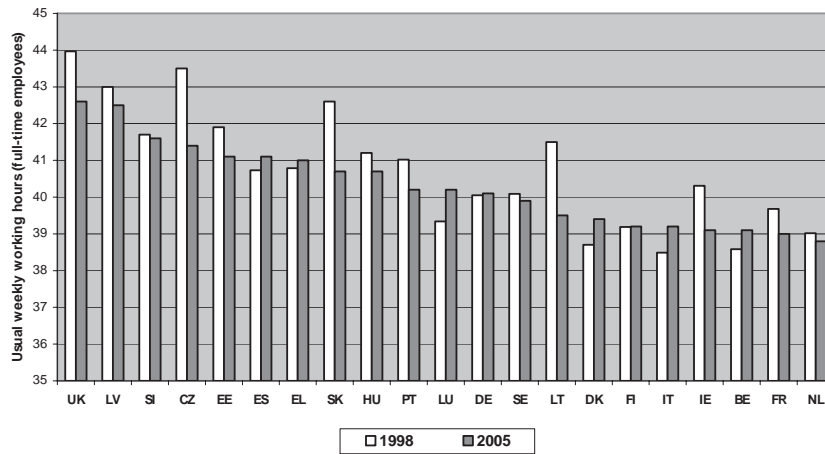


Sources: BMWA 2003; *European Labour Force Survey* / IAQ

Beyond cyclical patterns, however, the major and more general trend in actual hours so far appears to be a narrowing dispersion of average hours usually worked by full-time employees across EU countries (Figure 5).⁵ On *average*, and on *average only*, the emerging standard for weekly working hours in the EU is at roughly 40 hours. The concept of a certain convergence, for the time being, towards a 40-hour week in the EU is underpinned by recent trends in Central and Eastern European countries. What we have witnessed over the last few years is an impressive catch-up process by the new EU member countries, as far as weekly working hours are concerned.

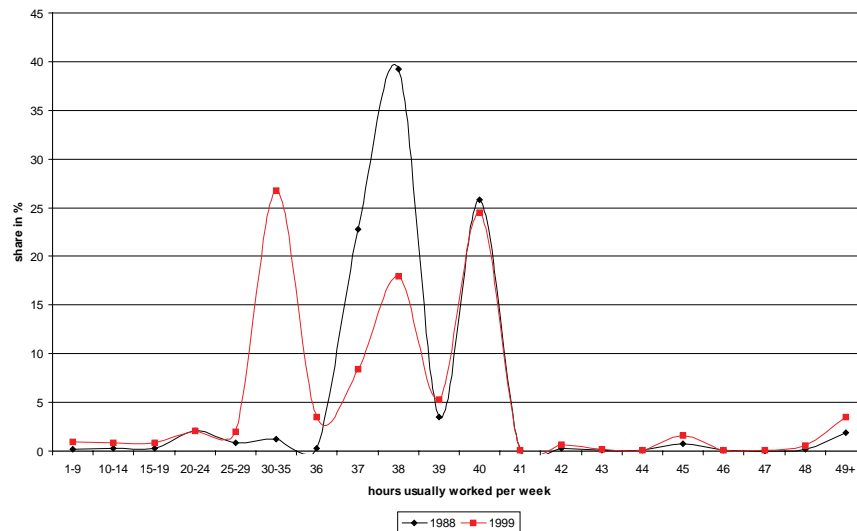
Behind the averages, however, the trends are less clear. The push in most EU countries for general working-time reductions, which was most prominent after World War II, in the 1950s, and again in the 1970s and early 1980s, has been by and large replaced by a move towards decentralised agreements on flexible working-time management. This shift is most pronounced in Germany, whose unions used to be forerunners of shorter standard hours in Europe. Here, the distinction between more flexible and longer hours gets blurry in many cases. This trend presents a new challenge for collective bargaining, as it raises the question about the actual implementation of working-time agreements in everyday working practices.

Figure 5: Usual weekly working hours of full-time employees in EU-21 countries, 1998–2005*



* 21 EU countries with comparable data available for both years.
Sources: EIROnline, *Employment in Europe 2006*, European Labour Force Survey / IAQ

Figure 6: Distribution of hours usually worked per week in the West German metalworking industry (1988–1999, by hour brackets)



Source: European Labour Force Survey / IAQ

A very rough indicator of this challenge is the development of working-times in the West German metalworking industry after the agreements on the 35-hour week (Figure 6). As is clearly exhibited by the data, the move to the 35-hour week was highly relevant for parts of the workforce but did not affect others at all. The former parts were mainly blue-collar workers in larger establishments with rigid and organised working-time systems (such as shift systems), whereas the latter were mainly white-collar workers.

Given the ongoing structural changes in the composition of the workforce, this experience was far from encouraging for the German unions. The obvious lesson has been that the implementation of agreements on new working-time standards can no longer be taken for granted. This experience contributed to the gap within the unions, between lip service paid to further working-time reductions and the virtual non-existence of action in that direction.

In recent years, moreover, the political move made by many employers in Germany has gone beyond blurring the boundaries between flexible and longer working time. There has been a strong and straightforward call from both private and public employers for longer working-times. This has contributed to a hardening of the overall bargaining situation, exemplified in the major industrial action in the public sector in 2006, but also the slide towards concession bargaining in core areas of the manufacturing industry.

It has to be noted, however, that this move has not triggered a general move towards longer working hours in Europe so far. Between 2000 and 2005, average usual working hours of full-time employees increased by roughly half an hour in Belgium, Italy and Spain, and remained within a range of plus and minus 0.5 hours in most other countries. In Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, but also in Ireland and the United Kingdom, full-time employees experienced, on average, a decrease between roughly one (United Kingdom and Ireland) and more than 1.5 hours (Czech Republic and Slovakia; see EIROnline, *Employment in Europe 2006*).

These contradictory trends provoke questions regarding the effectiveness of collective bargaining over working time on the different bargaining levels. In Europe, there is an obvious need for new, comparative research into the actual outcomes of more centralised versus more decentralised approaches to bargaining on wages and working hours. Undoubtedly, the capacity to put workingtime on the collective bargaining agenda, both at sectoral and at company levels, has become a major challenge for the unions.

Second Challenge: Irregularity and Flexibility of Working Hours

As already mentioned, the most salient trend in working-times in Western Europe over the last decade has been the push from many companies for greater flexibility of working hours from individual employees. To take Germany again as an example, two-thirds of companies apply some form of working-time flexibility beyond overtime, and two-thirds of them have introduced these working-time forms since the mid-1990s (employers survey, see Haipeter and Lehndorff 2005).

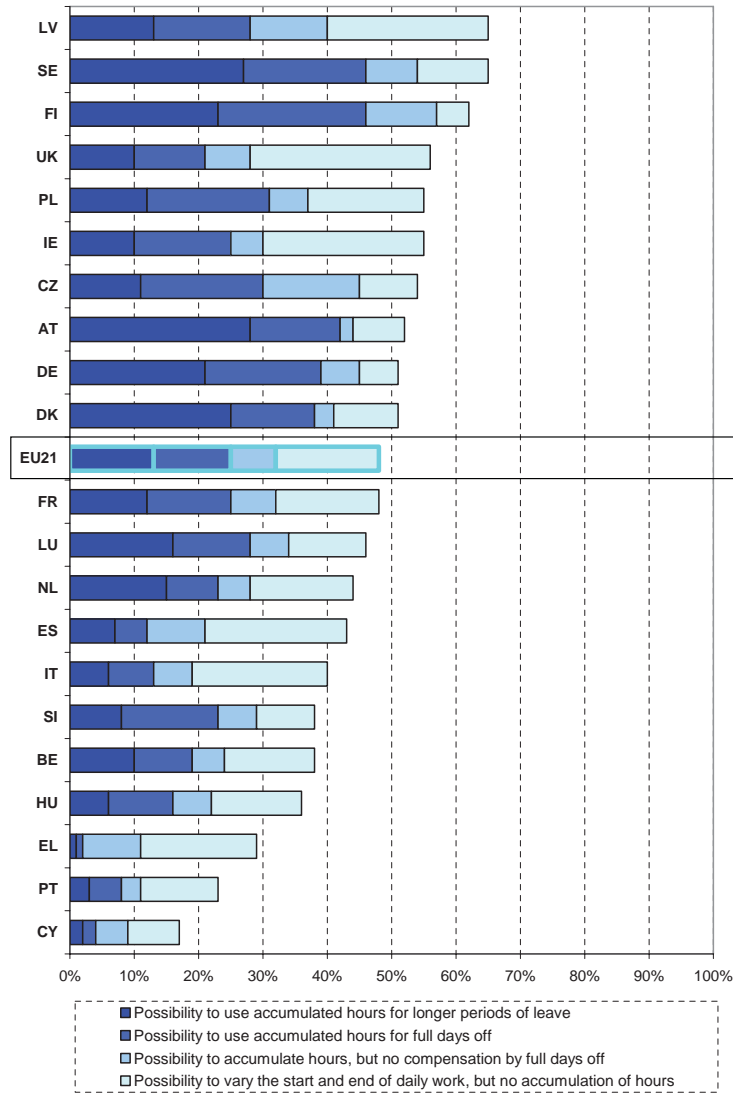
The powerful movement towards greater working-time flexibility over the last decade is a pertinent feature of working life in Germany and several other countries, including the Nordic ones, Austria, the Netherlands and France. As for the United Kingdom, in spite of the greater efforts of companies to save on overtime premiums by way of annualised hours, working-time flexibility continues to be very much focused on overtime (Schief 2006; Delsen et al. 2007).

In fact, in a EU-wide, cross-country perspective, there is large variation in forms of flexible working-time organisation (see Figure 7). It must be stressed that, in many cases, the move towards new forms of working-time flexibility is subject to collective agreements on establishment level, in some cases even within the framework of industry agreements. Thus, it is true that there is a great deal of 'controlled' or 'regulated flexibility' in European countries, next to various forms of unregulated and informal flexibility and what may be called the 'grey zone' of working-time regulation.

The benefit of working-time flexibility from a company's perspective is a better and cost-efficient, fit of individuals' working hours to the company's needs, in particular the adaptation of working hours to fluctuating business demands over the week, year or business cycle. From an employee's perspective this kind of flexibility is ambiguous. On the one hand it may entail a greater subordination of the individual's time to business needs. On the other, it may entail greater leeway to reconcile business needs with individual needs and preferences. We know from employee surveys in Germany that many workers are well conscious of this ambiguity but prefer the greater leeway and discretion provided to them by flexible working-time as compared to the more rigid schedules of the past. The contentious issue in particular for manual workers remains the loss of overtime pay, which continues to be the less popular aspect of the flexibility associated with the 35-hour week in France for many workers at the lower range of the pay scale.

Thus, trade unions and workplace representatives are pushed to find what might be called a new flexibility compromise within manufacturing and service industries; in other words, to find a balance between the trend towards more

Figure 7: Incidence of different forms of flexible working time arrangements, by country (%)



Note : Numbers indicate the percentage of establishments per country which implement the respective forms of flexible working-time organisation; the first two forms (from the left) may be regarded as advanced forms of flexi-time, including annualised hours, whereas the remaining two represent more traditional forms.

Source: Riedmann et al. (2006)

flexible and unsocial hours on the one hand, and workers' interest in predictable hours that allow a good work–life balance on the other.

There are basically three issues involved. The first one is unsocial hours working, which inevitably accompanies the trend towards extended operating and opening hours. The second one is coping with irregular and unpredictable hours. The third one, which I am going to dwell on a little longer, is the need for bargaining around greater capacity for workers to exert *individual* control over their working hours, with the *backup* of their workplace or trade union representatives.

All three issues are strategic ones, but the latter raises particular problems for the unions, as it entails among other things a cultural change. The 'individualisation' of working-time has become one salient aspect of the 'individualisation' of work organisation — that is, the gradual shift from direct management control towards more indirect forms of control (see Lehndorff and Voss-Dahm 2005 for various service activities). In a nutshell, what we are witnessing is a *delegation of uncertainty* from management to workers. Today this applies primarily to white-collar workers, but the frontier is being moved gradually into blue-collar heartlands of trade unionism. For Germany, the working-time implications of the delegation of uncertainty are reflected in an employee survey that covered working-time problems of employees at workplaces with self-managed working hours (see Table 3).

The bottom line is that self-managed working-time entails a greater time pressure and, in many cases, longer hours than contractually stipulated, but only one-fifth of the workers affected report that they were ordered to do so (in contrast with more than a third who report that they would have not been happy with the results if they had not put in extra hours). The implication of 'individualised' hours may be very simple: 'the job has to be done', and there is 'no other way to cope with it'.

Consequently, in a recent survey conducted by ver.di, the major service-sector union in Germany, the most important working-time problem reported by the 25 000 union members answering the questionnaire was 'time pressure' (Lehndorff and Wagner 2004). Quite obviously, when it comes to working-time problems, the critical matter for many workers is *control*. More precisely, greater *individual* control, but this can't substantially develop without greater *collective* backup.

All three strategic working-time issues mentioned (unsocial hours, unpredictable hours, 'individualised' hours) are shifting the focus to the above matter of control (Haipeter 2006). The importance of control is increasing even more in the face of the 'mega trend' of an ageing workforce in European countries. Health issues are most prominent in workplaces with shift and night work, but they are also closely related to workers' capacity to cope with their workload, most markedly at workplaces with self-managed hours (Gerlmaier 2006). The

challenge for trade unions, and future collective bargaining on working-time, may be summarised as *to offer safety, and allow for greater discretion and leeway* at the same time (Lehndorff 2006).

Table 3: Working hours and reasons for longer hours of workers with self-managed working times (employees, Germany 2002)*

Worked over the last four weeks ...	%
... Longer than contractually agreed	57
... Shorter than contractually agreed	4
... According to contractual working-time	39
Reasons for longer hours:	
No other way to cope with work load	82
Problems to be solved urgently	62
Wouldn't have been happy with results	36
I like my job	25
Ordered by the boss	20

* Self-managed working time was reported by approximately one-third of all workers; data for Germany 2002
Source: Bauer et al. (2004)

Hence, future working-time policies of European trade unions will have to be more workplace-focused than they used to be. At the same time, however, they have to be more 'political', or political in a new way.

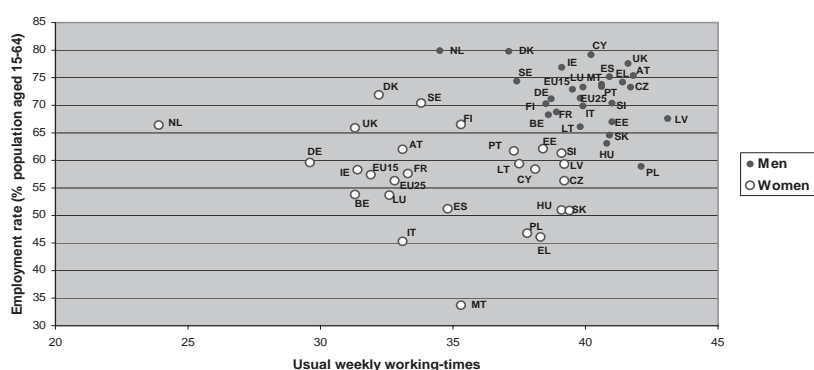
Third Challenge: Equal Career Opportunities for Women and Men

The objective of equal career opportunities for women and men have not been at the forefront of working-time policies of European trade unions so far. However, it definitely is a working-time issue, as the differences in working-time profiles of women across Europe are much more pronounced than those of men, a fact which has received little acknowledgement from many European trade unions. As exhibited in Figure 8, there are substantial gender gaps in both employment rates and working-times in most EU countries. Interestingly, this gap is least pronounced, though still relevant, in northern European countries where employment and working-time patterns of men and women are gradually converging over time.

In contrast to northern Europe, there are those countries that are conservative welfare states geared to the male breadwinner, such as Germany. Here, the working-

time of many female employees tends to be marginal part-time, thus confining this part of the workforce to poorly paid jobs with limited career opportunities. The implications are reflected in the development of earnings over the life course of women, which depend heavily on whether or not they have children and the number if they have them (Figure 9).

Figure 8: Employment rates and weekly working-times of men and women in EU-15 countries, 2005

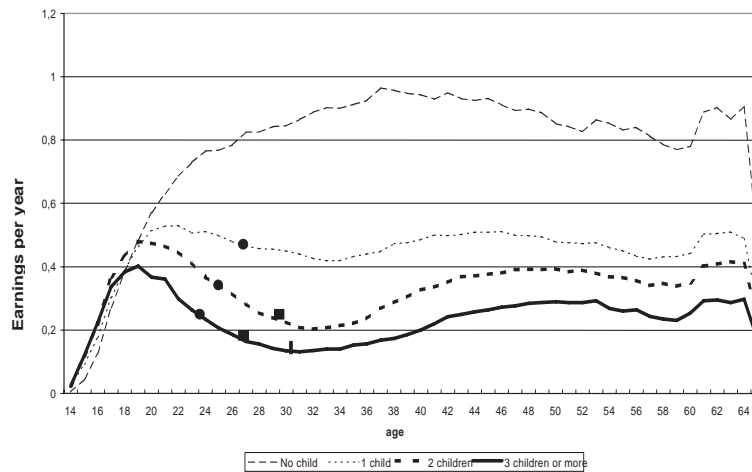


Sources: EIROOnline, *Employment in Europe 2006*

The paradoxical implication for European trade unions is that future working-time policies will not only aim at shorter hours but also at longer hours. In many European labour markets the rise in female labour-market participation is maintaining its momentum, irrespective of business cycles or high unemployment rates. The open question is whether or not this momentum is channelled or diverted into a part-time cul-de-sac. Under social conditions that continue to hamper women with children from making an *independent* living (in many respects still the case in Germany), there is a risk that the spread of part-time work and the boom of so-called mini-jobs will lead to a restriction of women's career opportunities. An underutilisation of skilled labour, on the one hand, and low fertility rates, on the other, are all facets of the same problem, which has become a popular topic of public debates in Germany recently.

The counter-example in Europe is the Swedish way, which is, in principle, much more conducive to female careers as a basis for making an independent living. Part-time work for women increasingly takes on the character of a transitional stage in the life course, and part-time hours are above the EU average (Anxo et al. 2006). Moreover, in the Nordic countries, both the female employment rates and the fertility rates are well above the EU average (Esping-Andersen 2002).

Figure 9: Earnings development over the life course of women in Western Germany, by number of children



Source: Klammer (2005)

One interesting lesson is that the overall higher volume of labour supply in Sweden and the other Nordic countries is absorbed by the higher labour demand of the welfare state, and the additional income generated is similarly absorbed by the financial needs of the welfare state (Anxo and Niklasson 2005).

As far as working-time policy is concerned, the story may also be told in a different manner. So far, no more efficient regulation of working hours of prime-age men and women has been found than living in a household with small children, provided both partners work full-time (or 'long' part-time). The latter must be facilitated by the welfare state. Thus, the welfare state proves to be the most effective, if *indirect*, regulator of working-time. In the past, trade union working-time policy was focused on direct working-time regulation by laws and collective agreements. In the era pursuing equal opportunities, working-time policy will need to be geared for both direct *and* indirect working-time regulation.

Conclusion

European trade unions will need to tackle these three major challenges if they want to regain their bargaining capacity to set shorter working hours in regaining their initiative in collective bargaining in general. Future working-time initiatives

of trade unions will arguably have a greater link to working-time conflicts at the establishment and workplace level than they used to, but they will also interact with a wider framework of welfare-state reforms aimed at better gender equity in working life. Thus, working-time policy will be, as compared to the past, more oriented towards both individual workplace issues and a wider social policy agenda.

Endnotes

1. The data on industrial relations indicators in the EU-25 draw on a recent research project funded by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions. The findings (Van Gyes et al. 2006) will be published on the Foundation's website, <www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/>.
2. Country codes in EU documents used in the present Tables and Figures:

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

3. Trade unionism in France is unique by European standards as it includes both political competition amongst unions and a strong element of occasional mass movements, rather than membership and organisation (Jansen 1987). The mass demonstrations in 2006 against the introduction of temporary 'First Hiring Contracts' especially for youths (*contrat première embauche* — CPE) that forced the government to withdraw the bill may have given a flavour of this French peculiarity to a wider public.
4. Italy and Spain have experienced, in different forms, a certain re-centralisation of bargaining over recent years (for details on industrial relations systems in EU countries, see *EIROOnline*).
5. As far as the countries with an increase of average hours worked, such as Italy, however, this may be caused primarily by an increase of formerly privileged high-skilled workers whose working-times used to be shorter than average

and have approached national standards over recent years. In other countries, in contrast, working-time dispersion across categories of workers may be on the rise (Schief 2004).

References

- Anxo, D, Boulin, J Y, Fagan, C, Inmaculada, D, Keuzenkamp, S, Klammer, U, Klenner, C, Moreno, G and Toharía, L (2006) *Working Time Options over the Life Course: New Work Patterns and Company Strategies*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Luxembourg.
- Anxo, D and Niklasson, H (2005) *The Swedish Model in Turbulent Times: Decline or Renaissance?*, Växjö University, <www.iatge.de/projekt/2005/dynamo/publications.html>.
- Bauer, F, Groß, H, Lehmann, K and Munz, E (2004) *Arbeitszeit 2003*, Köln.
- BMWA (2003) *Tarifvertragliche Arbeitsbedingungen im Jahr 2002*, Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit, Berlin.
- Bosch, G, Dawkins, P and Michon, F (eds) (1994) *Times are Changing: Working Time in 14 Industrialised Countries*, International Institute for Labour Studies, Geneva.
- Bosch, G and Lehdorff, S (2001) 'Working-time reduction and employment: experiences in Europe and economic policy recommendations', *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 25(2), pp. 209–43.
- Delsen, L, Bosworth, D, Gross, H and Muñoz de Bustillo y Llorente, R (eds) (2007) *Operating Hours and Working Times: A Survey of Capacity Utilisation and Employment in the European Union*, Physica, Heidelberg.
- Ebbinghaus, B and Visser, J (2004) *The Societies of Europe: Trade Unions in Western Europe Since 1945*, Palgrave Macmillan, Houndsmills and Basingstoke (first published 2000).
- EIROOnline, *Employment in Europe 2006*, <www.eurofound.europa.eu/eiro/>.
- Esping-Andersen, G (with Gallie, D, Hemerick, A and Myles, J) (2002) *Why We Need a New Welfare State*, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Gerlmaier, A (2006) 'Nachhaltige Arbeitsgestaltung in der Wissensökonomie? Zum Verhältnis von Belastungen und Autonomie in neuen Arbeitsformen' in S Lehdorff (ed.) *Das Politische in der Arbeitspolitik: Ansatzpunkte für eine nachhaltige Arbeits- und Arbeitszeitgestaltung*, Edition Sigma, Berlin, pp. 71–98.
- Haipeter, T (2006) 'Can norms survive market pressures? The practical effectiveness of new forms of working time regulation in a changing German economy' in J Y Boulin, M Lallement, J C Messenger and F Michon (eds) *Decent Working Time: New Trends New Issues*, International Labour Office, Geneva, pp. 319–41.
- Haipeter, T and Lehdorff, S (2005) 'Decentralised bargaining of working time in the German automotive industry', *Industrial Relations Journal*, 36(2), pp. 140–156.

- Hyman R (2001) *Understanding European Trade Unionism: Between Market, Class and Society*, Sage, London.
- Jansen, P (1987) *Die gescheiterte Sozialpartnerschaft: Die französische Gewerkschaftsbewegung zwischen Tarifautonomie und Staatsinterventionismus*, Campus, Frankfurt and New York.
- Katz, H C, Lee, W and Lee, J (eds) (2004) *The New Structure of Labor Relations: Tripartism and Decentralization*, ILR Press, Ithaca.
- Klammer, U (2005) 'Flexicurity aus der Perspektive des Lebensverlaufs' in M Kronauer and G Linne (eds) *Flexicurity: Die Bindung von Sicherheit an Flexibilität*, Edition Sigma, Berlin, pp. 249–74.
- Kohl, H and Platzer, H-W (2004) *Industrial Relations in Central and Eastern Europe: A Comparison of the Eight New EU Member States*, ETUI, Brussels.
- Lehndorff, S (2000) 'Working Time Reduction in the European Union: A Diversity of Trends and Approaches' in L Golden and D M Figart (eds) *Working Time: International Trends, Theory and Policy Perspectives*, Routledge, London, pp. 38–56.
- Lehndorff, S (2006) 'Sicherheit anbieten, Vielfalt ermöglichen: über Krise und Reformen der Arbeitszeitregulierung' in S Lehndorff (ed) *Das Politische in der Arbeitspolitik: Ansatzpunkte für eine nachhaltige Arbeits- und Arbeitszeitgestaltung*, Edition Sigma, Berlin, pp. 157–94.
- Lehndorff, S and Wagner, A (2004) "'Mein Engagement hängt von den konkreten Bedingungen ab": Welche Arbeitszeitprobleme haben Dienstleistungsbeschäftigte, was erwarten sie von ver.di?' in F Bsirske, M Mönning-Raane, G Sterkel and J Wiedemuth (eds) *Es ist Zeit: das Logbuch für die ver.di-Arbeitszeitinitiative*, Hamburg, pp. 195–236.
- Lehndorff, S and Voss-Dahm, D (2005) 'The delegation of uncertainty: flexibility and the role of the market in service work' in G Bosch and S Lehndorff (eds) *Working in the Service Sector: A Tale from Different Worlds*, Routledge, London, pp. 289–315.
- Riedmann, A, Bielenski, H, Szczurowska, T and Wagner, A (2006) *Working Time and Work-Life Balance in European Companies*, Establishment Survey on Working Time 2004–2005, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin, <www.eurofound.eu.int/publications/htmlfiles/ef0627.htm>.
- Schief, S (2004) *Is Working Time Longer for Highly Qualified Employees all over Europe?* Paper presented at "Flexibilités des temps de travail, éclatement des temps sociaux", 9th Meeting of the International Symposium on Working-Time, Paris, 26, 28 February 2004.
- Schief, S (2006) 'Nationale oder unternehmensspezifische Muster der Flexibilität?' in S Lehndorff (ed.) *Das Politische in der Arbeitspolitik: Ansatzpunkte für eine nachhaltige Arbeits- und Arbeitszeitgestaltung*, Edition Sigma, Berlin, pp. 227–48.

- Schulten, T (2005) *Changes in National Collective Bargaining Systems Since 1990 (Comparative Study)*, <www.eiro.eurofound.eu.int/print/2005/03study/tn0503102s.html>.
- Traxler, F, Blaschke, S and Kittel, B (2001) *National Labour Relations in Internationalized Markets*, Oxford University Press, Oxford and New York.
- Van Gyes, G, Kohl, H, Lehndorff, S, Schief, S, Schilling, G and Vandenbrande, T (2006) *Industrial Relations in the Member States of the European Union: A Basic Comparison of 25 National Systems*, synthesis report of the project 'Quality of industrial relations: comparative industrial relations country profiles in the EU Member States', commissioned by the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, Dublin.
- Visser, J (2004) 'Patterns and variations in European industrial relations', *Industrial Relations in Europe 2004*, Luxembourg, pp. 11–57.

STEFFEN LEHDORFF — *Institut Arbeit und Qualifikation,*
University of Duisburg-Essen
