

HOURS WORKED

Lower hours worked is one of the forms in which the benefits of productivity growth have been shared by people. In recent years, governments of several OECD countries have also pursued policies to make it easier for parents to reconcile work and family life, and some of these policies have tended to reduce working time.

Definition

The average number of hours worked per year is calculated as the total numbers of hours actually worked over the year divided by the average number of people in employment. The data cover employees and self-employed workers; they include both full-time and part-time employment.

Employment is generally measured through household labour force surveys. In accordance with the ILO Guidelines, employed persons are defined as those aged 15 years or over who report that they have worked in gainful employment for at least one hour in the previous week or were temporarily absent from work.

Estimates of the hours actually worked are based on national labour force surveys in most countries, while others use establishment surveys, administrative records or a combination of sources. Actual hours worked include regular work hours of full-time and part-time workers, overtime (paid and unpaid), hours worked in additional jobs, and time not worked because of public holidays, annual paid leave, illness, maternity and parental leave, strikes and labour disputes, bad weather, economic conditions and several other minor reasons.

Overview

In the large majority of OECD countries, average hours worked per employed person have fallen over the period from 2000 to 2010. However, this decline was rather small in most countries, as compared to the decline in earlier decades. Part of the observed decline in average hours worked between these two years may reflect business cycle effects.

For the OECD as a whole, the average hours worked per employed person fell from 1 818 annual hours in 2000 to 1 749 in 2010; this is equivalent to a reduction of around one and a half hours over a 40-hour work-week. Annual working hours fell in a majority of countries, increasing only in Belgium and Greece. Reductions in annual hours worked over this period were most marked in Chile, Iceland, the Czech Republic and Estonia, where they declined by over 100 hours, with Korea showing the largest decrease of 319 hours.

Although one should exercise caution when comparing levels across countries, actual hours worked are significantly above the OECD average in Korea, Greece, Chile, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland, Estonia, Turkey and Mexico, and significantly below the OECD average in the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, Belgium, Austria, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom. The Russian Federation is also significantly above the OECD average with 227 more hours.

Comparability

National statisticians and the OECD work to ensure that hours worked data are as comparable as possible. These data are however based on a range of sources of varying reliability. For example, for a number of EU countries, data are OECD estimates based on results from the *Spring European Labour Force Survey*; these results reflect a single observation in the year, and have to be supplemented by information from other sources on hours not worked due to public holidays and annual paid leave. Annual working hours reported for other countries are provided by national statistical offices and are estimated using the best available sources. These national data are intended for comparisons of trends in productivity and labour inputs and are not fully suitable for inter-country comparisons of the level of hours worked because of differences in their sources and other uncertainties about their international comparability.

Sources

- OECD (2011), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD Publishing.

Further information

Analytical publications

- Durand, M., J. Martin and A. Saint-Martin (2004), "The 35 Hour Week: Portrait of a French Exception", *OECD Observer*, No. 244, September, OECD Publishing.
- Evans, J.M., D. Lippoldt and P. Marianna (2001), "Trends in Working Hours in OECD Countries", *OECD Labour Market and Social Policy Occasional Papers*, No. 45.

Methodological publications

- OECD (2004), "Recent Labour Market Developments and Prospects: Clocking In (and Out): Several Facets of Working Time", *OECD Employment Outlook 2004*, OECD Publishing. See also Annex I.A1.

Websites

- OECD Employment Policies, www.oecd.org/els/employment.
- OECD Labour Statistics, www.oecd.org/statistics/labour.


Average hours actually worked

Hours per year per person in employment

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Australia	1 784	1 775	1 777	1 780	1 739	1 732	1 737	1 732	1 727	1 719	1 712	1 717	1 690	1 686
Austria	1 667	1 668	1 656	1 658	1 657	1 652	1 658	1 663	1 652	1 642	1 632	1 620	1 581	1 587
Belgium	1 567	1 578	1 581	1 545	1 577	1 580	1 575	1 549	1 565	1 566	1 560	1 568	1 550	1 551
Canada	1 780	1 779	1 778	1 775	1 768	1 747	1 736	1 754	1 739	1 738	1 738	1 728	1 700	1 702
Chile	2 256	2 299	2 277	2 263	2 242	2 250	2 235	2 232	2 157	2 165	2 128	2 095	2 074	2 068
Czech Republic	2 067	2 075	2 088	2 092	2 000	1 980	1 972	1 986	2 002	1 997	1 985	1 992	1 942	1 947
Denmark	1 544	1 559	1 569	1 581	1 587	1 579	1 577	1 579	1 579	1 586	1 570	1 570	1 559	..
Estonia	..	..	..	1 987	1 978	1 983	1 985	1 996	2 010	2 001	1 999	1 969	1 831	1 879
Finland	1 771	1 761	1 764	1 751	1 733	1 726	1 719	1 723	1 716	1 709	1 706	1 704	1 673	1 697
France	1 649	1 637	1 630	1 591	1 579	1 537	1 533	1 561	1 557	1 536	1 556	1 560	1 554	..
Germany	1 509	1 503	1 492	1 473	1 458	1 445	1 439	1 442	1 434	1 430	1 430	1 426	1 390	1 419
Greece	2 065	2 063	2 107	2 121	2 121	2 109	2 103	2 082	2 086	2 148	2 116	2 116	2 119	..
Hungary	2 059	2 052	2 067	2 057	2 011	2 019	1 990	1 993	1 993	1 989	1 985	1 986	1 968	1 961
Iceland	1 839	1 817	1 873	1 885	1 847	1 812	1 807	1 810	1 794	1 795	1 807	1 807	1 716	1 697
Ireland	1 832	1 754	1 725	1 719	1 713	1 698	1 671	1 668	1 654	1 645	1 634	1 601	1 549	1 664
Israel	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 905	1 989	1 887	1 921	1 898	1 889	..
Italy	1 863	1 880	1 876	1 861	1 843	1 831	1 826	1 826	1 819	1 815	1 816	1 803	1 772	1 778
Japan	1 865	1 842	1 810	1 821	1 809	1 798	1 799	1 787	1 775	1 784	1 785	1 771	1 714	1 733
Korea	2 582	2 488	2 495	2 512	2 499	2 464	2 424	2 392	2 351	2 346	2 306	2 246	2 232	2 193
Luxembourg	1 678	1 672	1 669	1 662	1 646	1 635	1 630	1 586	1 570	1 580	1 515	1 555	1 601	1 616
Mexico	1 927	1 878	1 922	1 888	1 864	1 888	1 857	1 849	1 909	1 883	1 871	1 893	1 857	1 866
Netherlands	1 451	1 440	1 437	1 435	1 424	1 408	1 401	1 399	1 393	1 392	1 388	1 379	1 378	1 377
New Zealand	1 821	1 824	1 837	1 828	1 817	1 817	1 813	1 828	1 811	1 788	1 766	1 750	1 738	1 758
Norway	1 478	1 476	1 473	1 455	1 429	1 414	1 399	1 417	1 420	1 414	1 419	1 423	1 407	1 414
Poland	..	..	..	1 988	1 974	1 979	1 984	1 983	1 994	1 985	1 976	1 969	1 948	1 939
Portugal	1 812	1 799	1 812	1 765	1 769	1 767	1 742	1 763	1 752	1 757	1 727	1 745	1 719	1 714
Slovak Republic	1 834	1 848	1 845	1 844	1 833	1 780	1 734	1 774	1 785	1 779	1 793	1 790	1 738	1 786
Slovenia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 698	1 669	1 655	1 687	..	..
Spain	1 728	1 732	1 732	1 731	1 727	1 721	1 706	1 690	1 668	1 656	1 636	1 647	1 653	1 663
Sweden	1 658	1 656	1 665	1 642	1 618	1 595	1 582	1 605	1 605	1 599	1 618	1 617	1 602	1 624
Switzerland	1 665	1 672	1 694	1 688	1 650	1 630	1 643	1 673	1 667	1 652	1 643	1 640	..	..
Turkey	1 878	1 884	1 925	1 937	1 942	1 943	1 943	1 918	1 936	1 944	1 911	1 900	1 881	1 877
United Kingdom	1 731	1 726	1 716	1 700	1 705	1 684	1 674	1 674	1 673	1 668	1 670	1 665	1 643	1 647
United States	1 846	1 846	1 847	1 836	1 814	1 810	1 800	1 802	1 799	1 800	1 798	1 792	1 768	1 778
OECD total	1 841	1 827	1 827	1 818	1 802	1 794	1 785	1 783	1 782	1 779	1 773	1 767	1 741	1 749
Russian Federation	1 951	1 946	1 964	1 982	1 980	1 982	1 994	1 994	1 990	1 999	2 000	1 997	1 973	1 976

 StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932505545>
Average hours actually worked

Hours per year per person in employment


 StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932505545>

