

HOURS WORKED

Governments of some OECD countries have pursued policies to make it easier for parents to reconcile work and family, and some of these policies also tend to reduce working time. Examples include the extension of annual paid leave, maternity/parental leave and workers' options for working part-time schedules or, albeit less frequently, the reduction of the full-time workweek.

Definition

The average hours worked is calculated as the total numbers of hours worked over the year divided by the average numbers of people in employment.

Employment is generally measured through household labour force surveys and, 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.

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

Long-term trends

In the large majority of OECD countries, hours worked have fallen over the period from 1994 to 2007. However, this decline was not particularly large in most countries, as compared to the decline in earlier decades and some of the decline in average hours between these two years may reflect transitory business cycle effects.

The average hours worked per year per employed person fell from 1 837 in 1994 to 1 768 in 2007; this is equivalent to a reduction in hours worked of more than one and a half 40-hour work-week. The table shows that working hours fell in a majority of countries; hours increased in only Belgium (to a small extent), Denmark, Greece, Mexico and Turkey. Reductions in hours worked were most marked in, Korea, Ireland, Luxembourg, France, Germany, Japan, Portugal and the Slovak Republic.

Although one should exercise caution when comparing across countries, it is clear from the table and chart that actual hours worked in the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Korea and Poland are largely above the average for OECD countries as a whole and that actual hours worked are relatively low in France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway and Sweden.

Comparability

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

Data cover dependent and self-employed as well as full-time and part-time employment.

Source

- OECD (2008), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD, Paris.

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 2004, OECD, Paris.
- Evans, J., D. Lippoldt and P. Marianna (2001), *Trends in Working Hours in OECD Countries*, OECD Labour Market and Social Policy Occasional Papers, No. 45, OECD, Paris.

Methodological publications

- OECD (2004), "Clocking In (and Out): Several Facets of Working Time", *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 Edition*, Chapter 1, see also Annex I.A1, OECD, Paris.

Websites

- OECD Labour Statistics Database, www.oecd.org/statistics/labour.
- OECD Employment Data, www.oecd.org/els/employment/data.

Average hours actually worked

Hours per year per person in employment

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	1 807	1 803	1 799	1 795	1 789	1 787	1 785	1 755	1 740	1 737	1 747	1 732	1 723	1 722
Austria	..	1 654	1 659	1 666	1 668	1 656	1 658	1 657	1 652	1 658	1 663	1 652	1 644	1 630
Belgium	1 554	1 580	1 554	1 567	1 578	1 581	1 554	1 577	1 579	1 575	1 549	1 565	1 571	1 566
Canada	1 762	1 761	1 774	1 767	1 767	1 769	1 768	1 762	1 744	1 734	1 753	1 738	1 738	1 736
Czech Republic	2 043	2 064	2 066	2 067	2 075	2 088	2 092	2 000	1 980	1 972	1 986	2 002	1 997	1 985
Denmark	1 494	1 499	1 494	1 512	1 528	1 539	1 554	1 562	1 556	1 552	1 556	1 556	1 562	1 577
Finland	1 775	1 776	1 775	1 771	1 761	1 765	1 750	1 734	1 728	1 720	1 724	1 718	1 714	1 710
France	1 675	1 651	1 655	1 649	1 637	1 630	1 591	1 579	1 537	1 533	1 561	1 559	1 541	1 533
Germany	1 547	1 534	1 518	1 509	1 503	1 492	1 473	1 458	1 445	1 439	1 442	1 435	1 433	1 433
Greece	2 133	2 123	2 098	2 065	2 063	2 107	2 121	2 123	2 106	2 116	2 064	2 081	2 150	..
Hungary	2 032	2 039	2 034	2 060	2 052	2 067	2 061	2 019	2 026	1 997	1 996	1 994	1 989	1 986
Iceland	1 813	1 832	1 860	1 839	1 817	1 873	1 885	1 847	1 812	1 807	1 810	1 794	1 795	1 807
Ireland	1 883	1 875	1 882	1 832	1 753	1 725	1 719	1 709	1 695	1 671	1 668	1 654	1 640	1 630
Italy	1 857	1 859	1 873	1 863	1 880	1 876	1 861	1 843	1 831	1 826	1 826	1 819	1 814	1 824
Japan	1 898	1 884	1 892	1 865	1 842	1 810	1 821	1 809	1 798	1 799	1 787	1 775	1 784	1 785
Korea	2 651	2 658	2 648	2 592	2 496	2 502	2 520	2 506	2 465	2 434	2 404	2 364	2 357	2 316
Luxembourg	1 709	1 719	1 691	1 678	1 672	1 669	1 662	1 646	1 634	1 630	1 586	1 570	1 604	1 542
Mexico	..	1 857	1 902	1 927	1 878	1 922	1 888	1 864	1 888	1 857	1 849	1 909	1 883	1 871
Netherlands	1 411	1 391	1 421	1 414	1 400	1 381	1 372	1 372	1 348	1 363	1 362	1 375	1 391	1 392
New Zealand	1 849	1 842	1 833	1 821	1 824	1 838	1 830	1 817	1 817	1 813	1 827	1 810	1 787	1 771
Norway	1 505	1 488	1 483	1 478	1 476	1 473	1 455	1 429	1 414	1 399	1 417	1 420	1 414	1 417
Poland	..	..	..	..	..	..	1 988	1 974	1 979	1 984	1 983	1 994	1 985	1 976
Portugal	1 838	1 897	1 848	1 812	1 799	1 812	1 765	1 769	1 767	1 742	1 763	1 752	1 758	1 728
Slovak Republic	1 854	1 879	1 840	1 834	1 798	1 808	1 811	1 799	1 746	1 673	1 708	1 741	1 749	..
Spain	1 733	1 733	1 729	1 728	1 732	1 732	1 731	1 727	1 721	1 706	1 690	1 668	1 653	1 635
Sweden	1 608	1 609	1 613	1 675	1 646	1 613	1 574	1 527	1 534	1 559	1 575	1 607	1 576	1 562
Switzerland	1 725	1 702	1 674	1 662	1 669	1 690	1 685	1 646	1 629	1 639	1 669	1 669	1 657	..
Turkey	1 886	1 876	1 892	1 878	1 884	1 925	1 937	1 942	1 943	1 943	1 918	1 918	..	..
United Kingdom	1 740	1 743	1 742	1 740	1 734	1 723	1 711	1 714	1 696	1 677	1 672	1 676	1 669	1 670
United States	1 833	1 840	1 832	1 842	1 843	1 844	1 832	1 811	1 807	1 797	1 799	1 795	1 797	1 794
OECD total	1 837	1 837	1 839	1 834	1 820	1 819	1 810	1 795	1 787	1 777	1 776	1 775	1 773	1 768

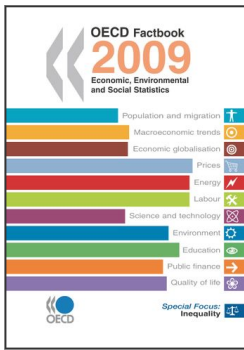
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/543226600873>

Average hours actually worked

Hours per year per person in employment



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/536836453771>



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