

## LMF2.1: Usual working hours per week by gender

### *Definitions and methodology*

Usual weekly working hours per week concern the number of hours a person works during a typical week (a 7-day period of a person in employment). This definition applies to all workers in their main job with regular schedules, including those who do not possess an employment contract – as for example, self-employed workers. Usual hours of work differ from normal hours of work as normal hours are set by law and/or collective agreements. The definition of usual hours includes overtime if it occurs systematically. Irregular or unusual overtime is not included, and neither are unusual periods of rest, as for example, maternity leave. Data on usual hours of work is not available for Iceland, Japan and Korea; information on actual hours is used for these countries instead.

Data on the incidence of usual weekly hours worked in the main job has been taken from the OECD database on Usual Weekly Hours Worked and is collected annually through the OECD Labour Force Questionnaire (historical data is available for many countries from 1995 onwards). Standard hour bands by gender are reported for most countries; ranging from the 1-19 hour-band up to those who work 60 hours per week or more. These hour-bands are then calculated as percentages of the total. With panels for individual countries, Chart LMF2.1.A shows the distribution of usual working hours per week for the working age population by gender.

### *Key findings*

In most countries, the incidence of working hours is 40 hours or more (Chart LMF2.1.A). The only exceptions are Belgium and Cyprus where a larger proportion of the working populations works between 35-39 hours per week. The distribution of the workforce by the working hours bands are more even for women than men as there is a higher incidence of part-time work among women and, thus, there are more women working fewer hours (see indicator LMF1.6 *Gender differences in employment outcomes*).

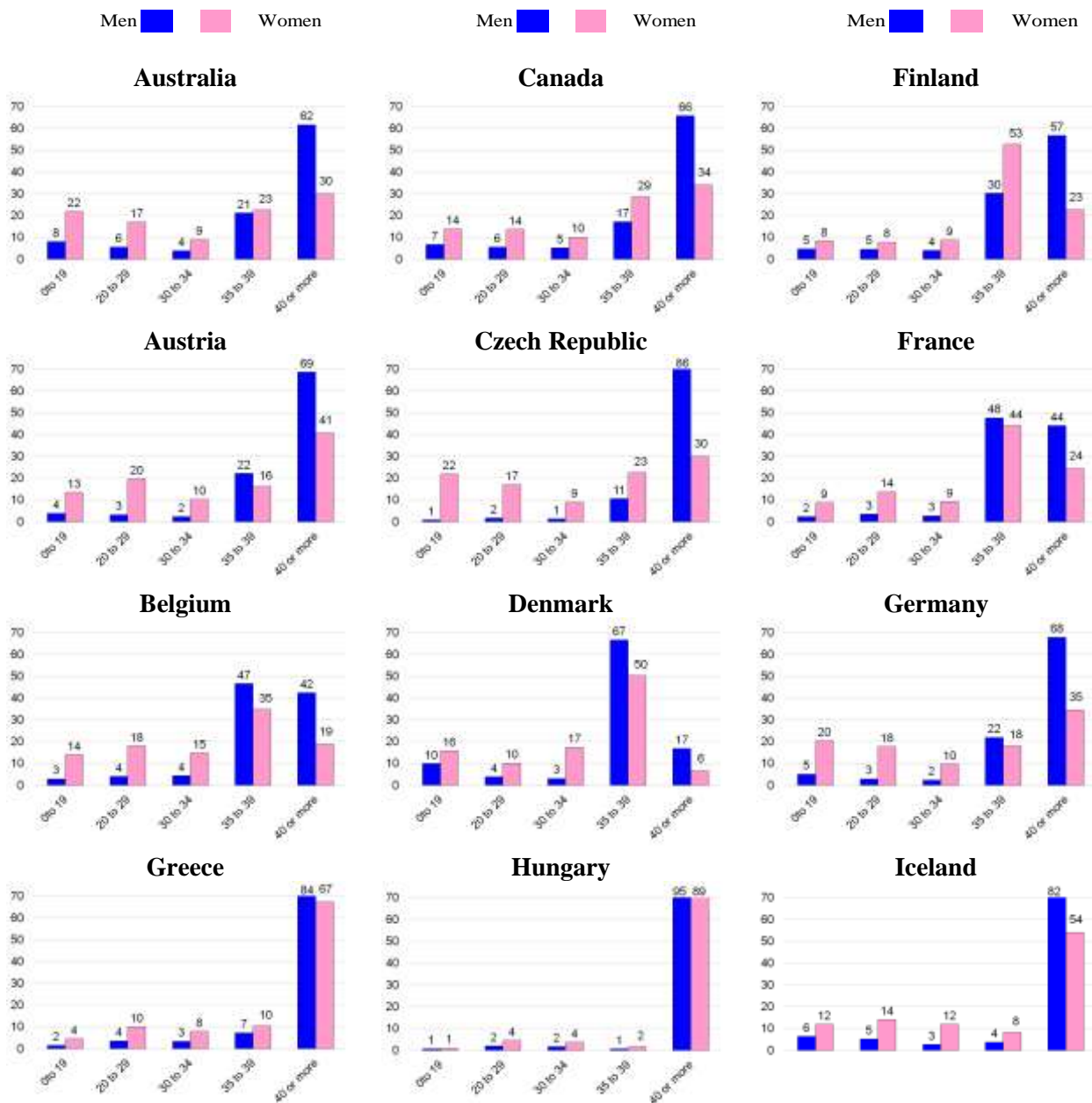
In a majority of countries the incidence of persons working at least 40 hours per week is declining over time (Charts LMF2.1.B). However, these changes in working hours should be considered in conjunction with the increase in employment: with women (and men) entering the labour force, there is a larger proportion that work part-time or reduced hours (see indicator LMF1.6 *Gender differences in employment outcomes*).

### *Data and comparability issues*

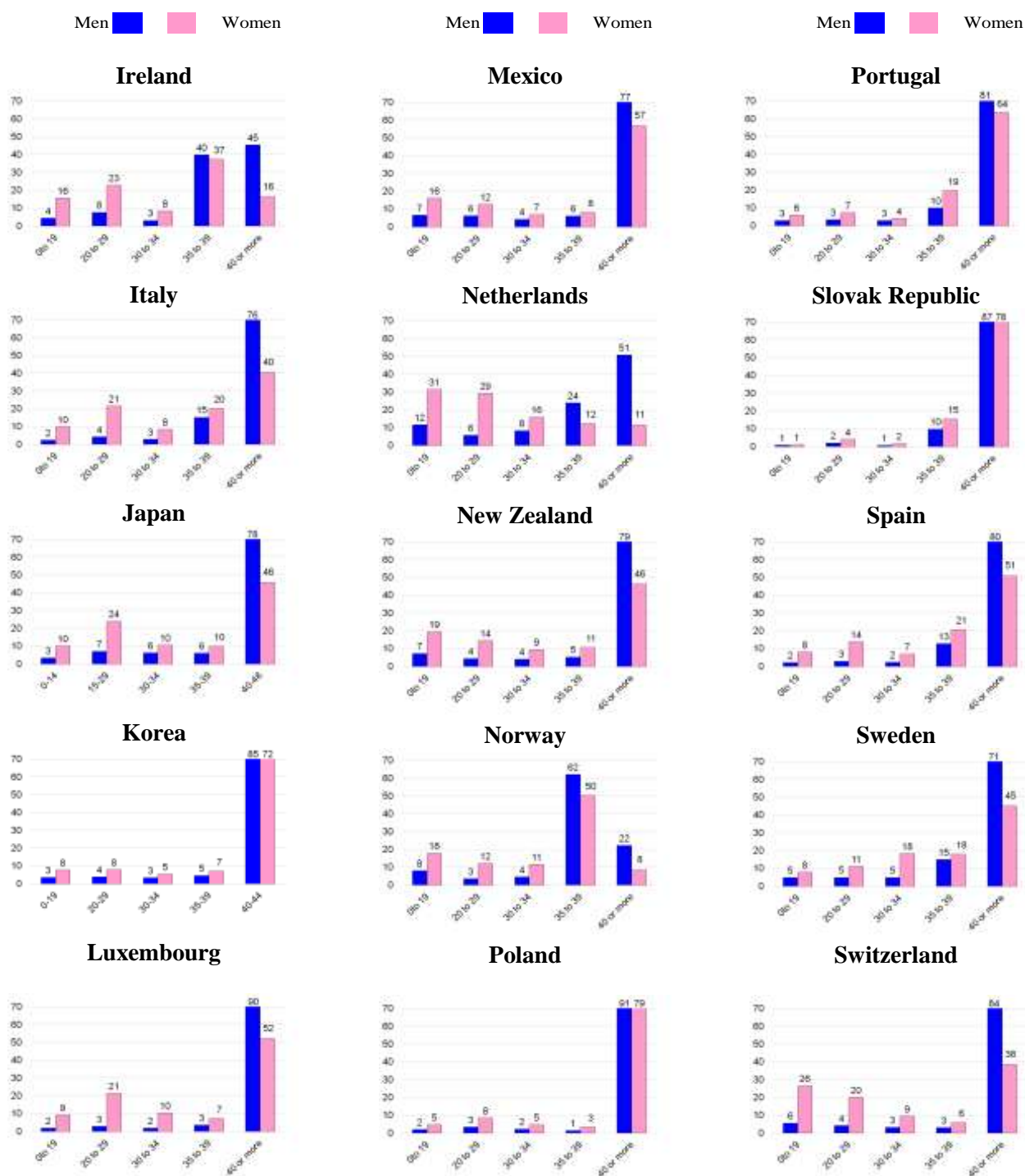
Data are taken from both National Labour Force Surveys and the European Labour Force Survey (ELFS). In the ELFS, only hours worked in the *main* job are reported in the usual weekly working hours database. However, some countries (Australia, Finland, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Norway and Poland) report hours worked in all jobs. Compared to countries which only report hours worked in the main job, data for these countries are thus more likely to concern longer hours bands. Three countries (Iceland, Japan and Korea) provide actual hours worked rather than usual hours, but it is unclear how this affects international comparison. For example, available information for France and the Netherlands for 2008 shows that reported actual hours per week are slightly higher than usual weekly working hours; by contrast actual hours worked in the United Kingdom are shorter than usual working hours in the same year.

Other relevant indicators: LMF1.2: Maternal employment; LMF1.3: Maternal employment by family status; LMF1.5: Gender pay gaps for full and part-time workers; LMF1.6: Gender difference in employment outcomes; and LMF2.4 Family-friendly workplace practices.

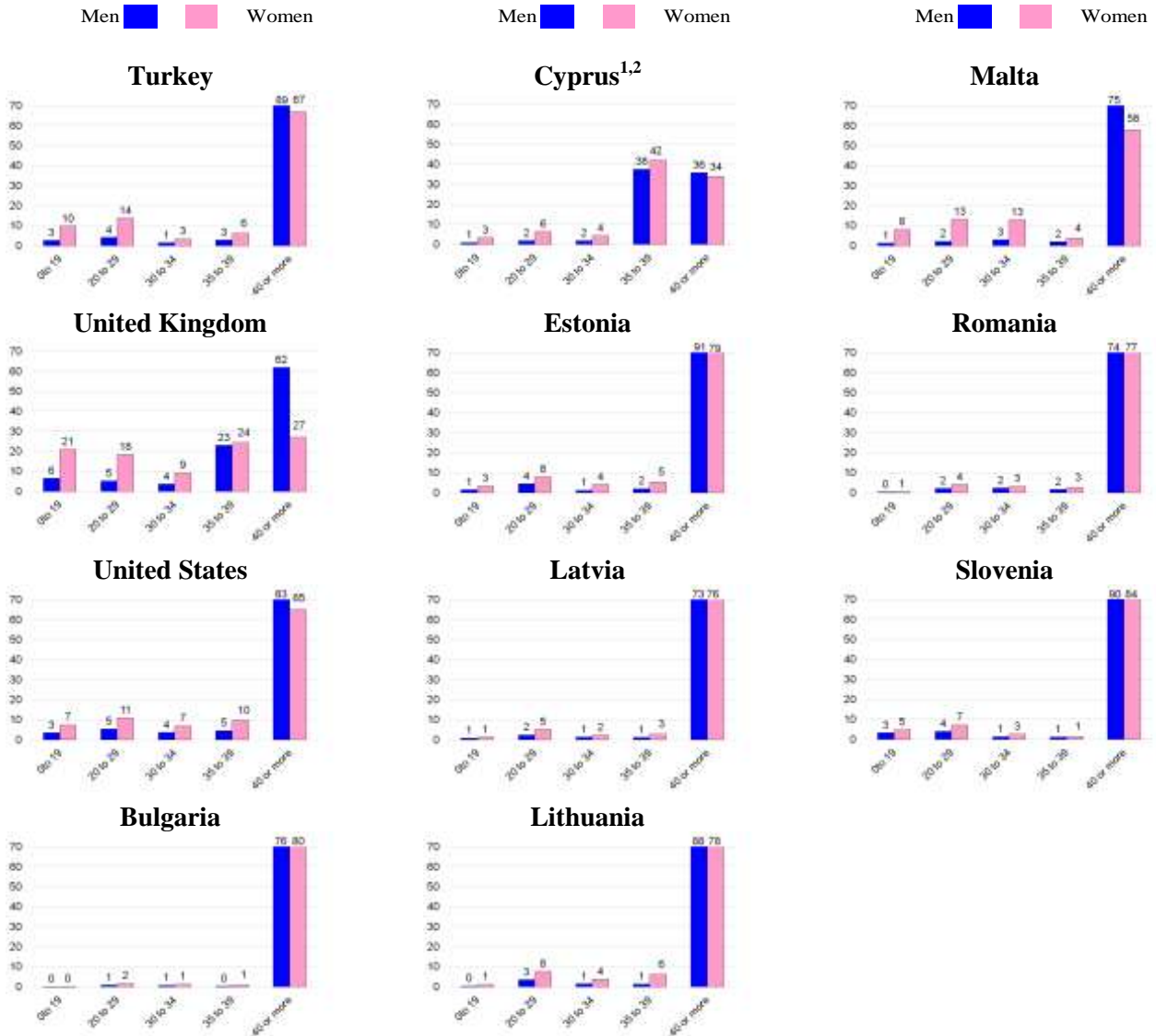
**Chart LMF2.1.A: Distribution of the working population by usual working hours per week by gender, 2010\* (as a percentage of the total working population)**



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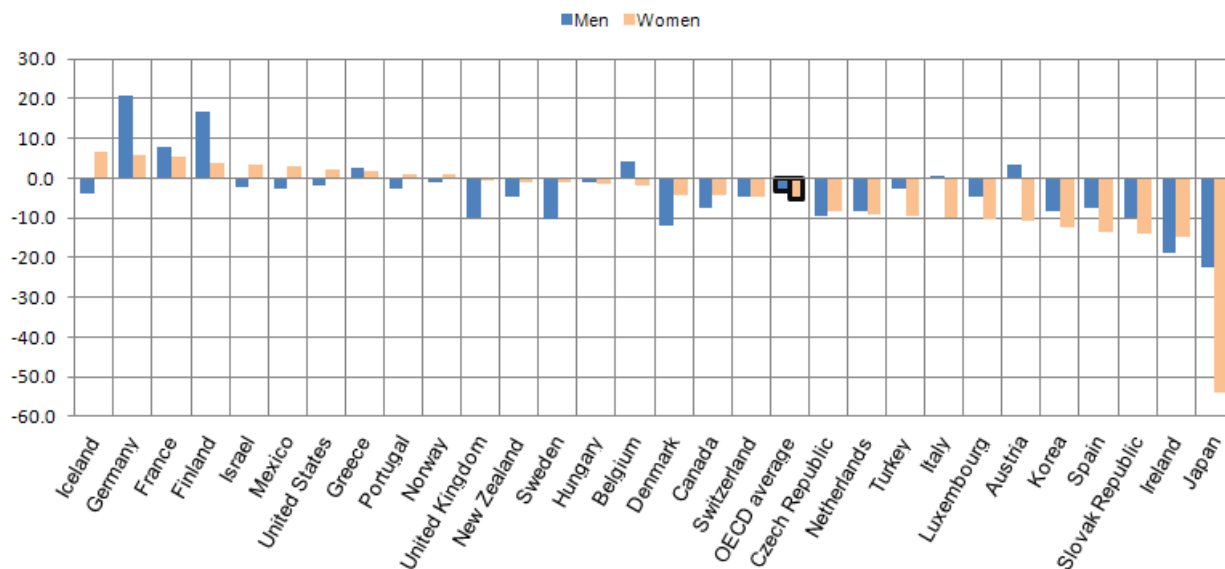


1) Footnote by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to « Cyprus » relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognizes the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting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

2) 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: OECD Labour Force Statistics, v. November 2011

**Chart LMF2.1.B: Change in percentage of the working population working more than 40 hours per week, 1995 to 2010**



Countries are ordered from left to right in descending for the difference in the proportion of women working 40+ hours in 2010 compared to 1995

Source: OECD Labour Force Statistics, v. November 2011

Sources and further reading: Employment Outlook (2011) *OECD*, the annual edition of *OECD Labour Force Statistics*, 1985-2010. OECD (2011) OECD Gender Initiative: the interim report <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/7/5/48111145.pdf>