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**Employment in European Agriculture: Labour Costs, Flexibility and Contractual Aspects**

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**Project Report**

on behalf of

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Abstract

With financial support from the European Union, Geopa-Copa launched and carried out a project on labour costs and working time flexibility in agriculture. In doing so, it addressed two extremely important factors in the profitability and productivity of agricultural enterprises. Both are fundamental objectives for any entrepreneurial activity as no business can hope to survive over the long term without profits. A glance at the labour market would suggest that agriculture is largely organised into small businesses with a large number of businesses that have no salaried employees whatsoever. Due to peaks in the workload, especially during times of harvest, seasonal workers are often employed. Often their numbers exceed those in the permanent workforce. The latter, however, tend to work more hours in total because seasonal workers are taken on for shorter periods of time. Temporary agency workers and contractors on the other hand are rarely found in the agriculture sector. Labour costs differ dramatically across the European Union. In the most expensive country, labour costs are nine times higher than in the least expensive location. In approximately half of the countries studied, seasonal workers came with lower labour costs than permanent employees. Internationally, there was no logical sequence when comparing the costs of permanent employees, seasonal workers and temporary agency workers. There were also major differences in labour cost structures. This meant that, in Ireland, on top of remuneration for works carried out, there was only an additional 23% to be paid in additional costs such as special payments, payments for days not worked, employers’ social security contributions and miscellaneous costs. In Spain, on the other hand, these additional costs amounted to 107%. These values, however, can only really be viewed as a rough indication as, in the majority of countries, the calculations had to include at least partial estimates. In many countries, working time can be adapted on a fully flexible basis to reflect the seasonal operational needs. In a number of cases, however, the legal modulation options appear to be generous but are actually restricted through strict guidelines on contractual implementation. This is the case, for example, in France where for a modulation phase of a maximum of 12 months, there must be agreement in advance on when a longer period than usual will be worked, when the working time will be shorter and when normal hours will apply. The number of employees who will be affected by the modulation also has to be specified in advance. Temporary agency workers and contractors are relatively uncommon in agriculture. There are, however, models in Italy which offer the harvest as a public service contract or which involve outsourcing the harvest to the buyer of the agricultural products. This is a prime example of the need to regulate working time in a way that is flexible.

# Introduction

Agriculture is an economic sector with very specific conditions. This is due not least of all to the dependency on the weather conditions, precipitation and climate. These factors have a considerable influence on the labour market. During times of harvest there are very pronounced peaks in workload which can only be predicted on a short term basis due to the weather conditions and seasonality.

Additionally, many agricultural enterprises are very small and have only a few employees, if any at all, who are very often family members helping out. This means that official data on agriculture is highly fragmented, especially where data on labour costs is concerned. As a consequence, agriculture is not included in the labour cost survey carried out by the European Commission every four years.

In order to plug a number of these gaps and explore in greater detail the relationship between labour costs and working time flexibility, Geopa-Copa launched and carried out a project that was supported by the European Commission. As part of the project, a questionnaire was drawn up which was to be completed by the member organisations. Full details relating to this questionnaire and in-depth considerations were discussed during a seminar which took place in Kaunas, Lithuania, on 26 and 27 November 2013.

The attached report ties in with earlier studies on labour costs in agriculture (Geopa-Copa, 2007, Report from the Geopa-Copa Seminar: Agricultural Employees and Social Dialogue in Agriculture in the Member States) and on employment in the agriculture sector (Geopa, 2002, Seasonal Workers in European Agriculture – Geopa Survey) and therefore also updates the data included in this study. One new element is the additional consideration of working time flexibility which is not only examined on an individual basis but also in conjunction with cost aspects. This is broken down as follows: chapter three contains a report on the employment situation in agriculture in which a distinction is made between seasonal workers and permanent employees (which will henceforth be used as a synonym for the permanent workforce). Different delimitations are also discussed and contrasted with the results of the European Commission’s official survey.  
Chapter four offers an international comparison of the labour costs of various activities and compares the costs of permanent employees, seasonal workers and temporary employees. This chapter does not only consider the total cost but also looks in greater detail at how labour costs are structured. The connection to working time flexibility is also addressed at this stage; if, for example, there were cost advantages in a given country of employing temporary workers, then it would be more cost-effective to employ a large number of temporary workers there in order to increase flexibility in the work volume.

Chapter five documents how many working hours are usually agreed in the (collective) agreement, when overtime is worked and at what rate overtime hours are to be paid. A description is provided of the possible ways of increasing flexibility for certain groups of workers (for example working time accounts) as well as the framework within which the weekly working time is able to fluctuate. There is a more in-depth assessment of whether from a cost point of view certain measures could be used to afford greater flexibility. Finally, the contractual aspects of implementing flexibility measures are covered.

# Labour Market

## Number of Employers and Businesses

Agriculture is organised into small businesses all across Europe. The Geopa-Copa survey also appears to confirm this. According to the survey, in the countries which answered the questionnaire there are six times as many agricultural businesses as there are employers or, in other words, five out of every six agricultural businesses have no employees on their books. Particularly high numbers of businesses without any employees were found in Poland, Portugal, Austria and Belgium with a ratio of businesses to employers of over ten to one. Comparatively, approximately 30% of agricultural businesses in France and Spain do have employees. When drawing any comparisons, however, it must be kept in mind that the figures are not necessarily fully compatible, as the figures on overall farms are taken fron Eurostat’s statistics (Eurostat, 2013, Agriculture, forestry and fishery statistics, 2013 edition, eurostat pocketbooks), whereas the figures for employers are taken directly from information collected from Geopa-Copa members.

Table 2‑1: Employers and Businesses in Agriculture

Total

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Employers | Businesses |
| Spain | 300,000 | 989,800 |
| Italy | 190,045 | 1,620,900 |
| France | 138,600 | 516,100 |
| Latvia | 83,385 | 83,400 |
| Germany | 70,000 | 299,100 |
| Poland | 70,000 | 1,506,600 |
| Netherlands | 16,498 | 72,300 |
| Denmark | 11,831 | 42,100 |
| Austria | 11,646 | 150,200 |
| Portugal | 11,098 | 305,300 |
| Ireland | 10,000 | 139,900 |
| Finland | 6,412 | 63,900 |
| Belgium | 2,766 | 42,900 |

Employers: As of 2012 (where possible); Businesses: As of 2010; Latvia: The number of employers and businesses is identical here because self-employed farmers have to pay themselves a wage.

Sources: Geopa-Copa, Eurostat

With regard to the absolute number of employers, Spain is by far the most important agricultural country in the EU, ahead of Italy and France (Table 3-1). When looking at the number of businesses, the rankings look somewhat different. According to official statistics, from the countries studied, the country with the largest number of agricultural businesses in the EU is Italy. Poland is only lagging slightly behind in second place, with Spain in third place. In Romania, which did not feature in the survey, there are more than double the number of businesses of Poland but the majority of them are very small.

## Employees

According to a survey of Geopa-Copa members, the number of permanent employees is greatest in France with 200,000, which places it just ahead of Germany, Latvia and the United Kingdom (Table 3-2). Spain and Italy follow but quite some way behind. The high number of employees in Latvia was a particularly surprising feature in the ranking. This can be explained by the institutional structure: in Latvia self-employed farmers also have to pay themselves a wage. As such, for the purposes of the questionnaire, the self-employed are also considered employees.

Table 2‑2: Permanent Employees in Agriculture

Total

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | Geopa-Copa Survey |
| France | 200,415 |
| Germany | 193,000 |
| Latvia | 180,994 |
| United Kingdom | 172,000 |
| Spain | 130,000 |
| Italy | 115,395 |
| Poland | 89,221 |
| Hungary | 88,416 |
| Netherlands | 87,333 |
| Denmark | 34,814 |
| Portugal | 30,569 |
| Lithuania | 27,915 |
| Sweden | 21,699 |
| Ireland | 20,000 |
| Austria | 12,702 |
| Belgium | 9,239 |
| Finland | 6,680 |

Permanent employees: Employees who are employed the whole year round and who therefore have basically an open-ended contract. Seasonal disruptions or working time fluctuations are possible. As of: 2012 (where possible); Latvia: Geopa-Copa-Survey includes self-employed farmers

Sources: Geopa-Copa, Eurostat

With regard to the total number of people employed, permanent employees only make up a fraction. According to data from Eurostat, overall they represent only 15% of the work volume that is directly taken on by agricultural businesses in the EU, i.e., excluding temporary agency workers. The lion’s share of 78% is accounted for by self-employed farmers and their family members. Almost 8% is carried out by seasonal workers. On the basis of number of employees alone, however, seasonal workers by far outnumber permanent employees, as demonstrated by the Geopa-Copa survey (Table 3-3). This applies in particular to the countries with strong employment France, Spain and Italy. In these countries there are between five- and almost nine times more seasonal workers than permanent employees. A whole host of countries, however, involve only a few seasonal workers when organising their workload. This applies to the United Kingdom, Poland, Lithuania, Sweden and Ireland which have considerably lower numbers of seasonal workers than workers with fixed employment contracts.

Table 2‑3: Permanent Employees and Seasonal Workers

Figures in 2012

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Permanent Employees | Seasonal Workers |
| France | 200,415 | 1,050,000 |
| Germany | 193,000 | 330,000 |
| Latvia | 180,994 | 106,745 |
| United Kingdom | 172,000 | 67,000 |
| Spain | 130,000 | 720,000 |
| Italy | 115,395 | 978,075 |
| Poland | 89,221 | 44,124 |
| Hungary | 88,416 | 83,471 |
| Netherlands | 87,333 | 120,233 |
| Denmark | 34,814 | - |
| Portugal | 30,569 | 8,018 |
| Lithuania | 27,915 | 2,944 |
| Sweden | 21,699 | 16,641 |
| Ireland | 20,000 | 6,000 |
| Austria | 12,702 | 40,339 |
| Belgium | 9,239 | 45,337 |
| Finland | 6,680 | 15,500 |

Permanent employees: Employees who are employed the whole year round and who therefore have basically an open-ended contract. Seasonal disruptions or working time fluctuations are possible. Seasonal workers: workers employed for a relatively short period of time (between one day and eight months) in order to carry out works that are usually required at approximately the same time each year (e.g. harvest work, vine- and tree-cutting, goose-fattening).

Latvia: Permanent employees include self-employed farmers

Source: Geopa-Copa

In addition to the workers employed directly by agricultural holdings, there are also contractors and temporary agency workers who are employed by temporary employment agencies and are made available to firms in agriculture for a certain period of time. Information is scarce, however, regarding the people employed by these external firms. Where information is available, it seems that this practice only exists on a very small scale. In all countries, the number of part time workers is almost negligible. Contractors, however, seem to play a more prominent role in Portugal and Latvia. In Portuguese agriculture, contractors represent over half of the seasonal workforce and for every ten permanent employees employed directly by farms, there are six contractors working permanently on the farm. This figure in Latvia is only three contractors to every ten employed permanently on the farm. There, however, the farm owner and their family members are also included in the figures for those permanently employed on the farm.

# Labour Costs

## Recording of Labour Costs

Official statistics rarely make reference to labour costs in agriculture. This is almost certainly connected to the fact that statistics on earnings and labour costs are usually only compiled for firms with at least ten employees and, as demonstrated in chapter three, the majority of agricultural holdings are very small. This is why Geopa-Copa asked its members to provide detailed information so that labour costs per hour could be calculated. Exact information on actual hourly earnings and special payments could not be produced in all cases so information is partially based on negotiated wages and partially on minimum wages or estimates of those questioned. This leaves us with the following gaps in information:

* Data on the earnings actually paid are only available for Finland, Italy, Sweden and Hungary. Estimates are available for Denmark, the United Kingdom, Poland and Lithuania.
* Information on special payments actually paid only exist for Austria and Finland. For the Netherlands and Denmark, there is specific information confirming that no special payments are made. In Austria, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Latvia and Ireland, only the negotiated wages were given. According to information from the member organisation, negotiated wages in Spain are exactly the same as actual earnings. The Netherlands also gave the same figures for actual and negotiated wages. Lastly, labour costs in Belgium and France are based on information regarding the minimum wage and are therefore below the threshold of the actual labour costs.
* Information on the average length of continued remuneration paid during periods of illness only exist for Austria, Belgium, Sweden, Lithuania, Denmark, Latvia and Hungary, and there is also information stating that employers in Portugal and Italy do not have to continue to pay wages in the event of illness.
* It is also very difficult to compile data on miscellaneous additional costs – i.e. the components that are not included in earnings with deductions made for the employer’s social security contributions. Detailed information on this point is only available for Spain and Finland. There are estimates for Austria, the Netherlands, France and Hungary. These items are most likely to be underestimates.
* In the majority of cases there is no precise information on the exact figures on real working time – this is especially relevant when the earnings data is only available on a monthly basis – and on the number of overtime hours actually worked.

## Level of Labour Costs

The 2012 results show that from among the 16 countries studied, Denmark had by far the highest level of costs with labour costs amounting to over 28 euros for each hour worked (Table 4-1). The restrictions referred to in section 3.1 regarding the quality of the calculations and comparability of the figures, however, still apply. If you were to look at Denmark, which provided an estimate of the actual earnings, and base labour costs on the negotiated wages, the result would be a cost level of just under 25 euros which would represent the highest value of the countries studied. On the basis of the minimum wage, however, labour costs were just under 22 euros. In Sweden, the United Kingdom and Finland, labour costs were between just under 22 and just under 24 euros. In Austria, France, the Netherlands, Belgium and Italy, labour costs were between just under 17 euros and just under 14 euros. In Ireland, the hourly labour costs amount to just over 11 euros, whilst Spain is just below the 10 euro-mark with labour costs of just over 9 euros. Labour costs are considerably lower in Portugal and the newer EU Member States of Hungary, Latvia, Poland and Lithuania. In these countries, hourly labour costs are only in the region of between 5 and 3 euros. Despite problems with data and comparability this results in a ranking that is not dissimilar to that of the manufacturing industry. In that ranking too the Scandinavian countries are far ahead. By comparison, labour costs in British agriculture, however, seem to be very high. In the manufacturing industry, the United Kingdom is only in the middle of the table, with costs far below those of the Benelux countries, Austria and Ireland. In agriculture, labour costs in the United Kingdom are almost twice as high as they are in Ireland and considerably higher than the group of Austria, France, Belgium and the Netherlands which all in all have high to very high labour costs in industry.

Table 3‑1: Labour Costs in Agriculture

Euros per hour worked by a permanent member of staff

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | 2012 | 2006 |
| Denmark | 28.37 | 18.88 |
| Sweden | 23.77 | 15.80 |
| United Kingdom | 22.16 | 10.26 |
| Finland | 21.58 | 12.31 |
| Austria | 16.63 | 13.32 |
| France | 16.61 | 10.61 |
| Netherlands | 15.73 | 12.42 |
| Belgium | 15.19 | 12.30 |
| Italy | 13.72 | 11.15 |
| Ireland | 11.22 | 7.28 |
| Spain | 9.38 | 8.50 |
| Hungary | 5.28 | 2.02 |
| Portugal | 4.35 | 4.33 |
| Latvia | 3.90 | 1.22 |
| Poland | 3.32 | 1.85 |
| Lithuania | 3.13 | 2.36 |

2006: Data based on collectively-agreed wages are therefore only comparable with 2012 on a limited basis.

2012: Earnings data constituted by minimum wages in Belgium and France, agreed earnings in Austria, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Latvia and Ireland and actual earnings in the United Kingdom, Finland, Italy, Sweden, Lithuania, Denmark, Poland and Hungary, of which the actual earnings have been estimated by Geopa-Copa member organisations for the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Denmark and Poland.

Source: Geopa-Copa

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | A Minimum wage | B Contractual gross earnings | C Contractual special payment | D Effective gross earnings | E Effective special payment | F Paid holiday | G Holidays | H Sick leave | I  Social security | J Misc. Costs |
| Country | In national currency | In national currency | In national currency or as a multiple of a monthly salary | In national currency | In national currency or as a multiple of a monthly salary | In working days | In working days | In working days (only if paid for by the employer) | As a percentage of annual gross earnings | As a percentage of annual gross earnings |
| France | 9.43 euros |  |  | At least 9.43 euros |  | 25 | Up to 11 (calendar-dependent) | No average figure | 33 | Approx. 12 |
| Sweden |  |  |  | 126.66 skr | n/a | 25 | 10 | 10 minus 1 unpaid day | 31.42 | 4.16 1) |

Examples of calculating labour costs:

Table 3‑2: Structure of labour costs in France and Sweden for permanent employees

Data from Geopa-Copa members in simplified form

1. Pension scheme

Source :  Geopa-Copa

The data was used to calculate the labour costs in the following way:

France: The starting point for all countries is a 5-day week with 260 potential working days. The hourly wage is also paid on paid and non-working days. In France this amounts to 25 days of holiday, 11 days off and an estimated 10 days of continued pay in the event of illness. This means that out of the 260 paid days, only 214 days (= 260 days - 25 days - 11 days – 10 days) are actually worked. This means that with an hourly rate of 9.43 euros per paid hour, earnings for hours worked amount to 11.45 euros (= 9.43 euros \*260/214). On top of this there are further increments of 33 percent for social security and 12 percent for miscellaneous costs. This means labour costs per hour of:

9.43 euros \* (260/214)\* (1+0.33+0.12) = 16.61 euros

Sweden: In Sweden the first day of sick leave is not paid. Therefore it is not 260, but only from a total of 259 paid working days are there .44 paid working days (25 + 10 + (10 - 1)) despite the fact that no service is provided on these days. This means that work is actually carried out on 215 working days (259 days - 44 days). This means that labour costs per hour can be calculated in the following way:

126,66 skr \* (259/215) \* (1+0,3142+0,0416) = 206,87 skr (= 23,77 Euro)

In comparison to Geopa-Copa’s last survey in 2006, it seems that there have been considerable increases across the majority of countries. Particularly striking are the differences in the United Kingdom and Finland. In France and Ireland too, however, there have been some very noticeable rates of change. In Hungary and Poland, labour costs have even multiplied. Several causes explain these increases which are dramatic in some cases:

* Labour costs have gone up in real terms primarily due to wage increases over a six-year period.
* The 2006 assessment was based entirely on collectively-agreed earnings. The current survey also includes actual earnings.
* Additional costs were compiled in a different way in the 2006 in comparison to the current survey. Whilst in 2006 the Geopa-Copa member countries provided the amount of labour costs directly, in the current survey these were calculated based on detailed information provided by the members. This improves the transparency of the results and leads to greater uniformity, therefore enabling a better comparison of the results.

## Structure of Labour Costs

The cost structure in agriculture differs dramatically from country to country. This becomes evident when comparing additional labour cost ratios. The additional cost ratio is derived from the relationship between the charges related to personnel and the remuneration for time worked (direct pay). Labour costs are determined as the sum of the direct pay and the charges related to personnel. Direct pay is to be understood as the wage that is regularly paid for hours worked. Remuneration for time off work, holiday pay and public holiday pay, continued pay from the employer in the event of sickness, special cases of paid leave under particular circumstances (weddings, for example) and for staff meetings – and one-off salary components such as Christmas and holiday pay, seniority bonuses and special payments generated by successes or good performance do not form part of the direct pay but rather count as charges related to personnel. Charges related to personnel therefore also include part of the annual earnings. Furthermore the charges related to personnel also include the employer’s social security contributions, the costs of an occupational pension scheme, costs of training and further training, costs of recruitment and dismissal, costs of participating in company structures and miscellaneous costs.

Table 3‑3: Structure of Labour Costs

Permanent Employees in Agriculture in 2012

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Total Labour Costs | Direct Pay | Additional Staffing Costs |
|  | In euros for every hour worked | | As a percentage of the direct pay |
| Denmark | 28.37 | 20.15 | 41 |
| Sweden | 23.77 | 14.55 | 63 |
| United Kingdom | 22.16 | 15.05 | 47 |
| Finland | 21.58 | 11.47 | 88 |
| Austria | 16.63 | 8.71 | 91 |
| France | 16.61 | 9.43 | 76 |
| Netherlands | 15.73 | 9.42 | 67 |
| Belgium | 15.19 | 10.08 | 51 |
| Italy | 13.72 | 8.06 | 70 |
| Ireland | 11.22 | 9.10 | 23 |
| Spain | 9.38 | 4.54 | 107 |
| Hungary | 5.28 | 3.14 | 68 |
| Portugal | 4.35 | 3.00 | 45 |
| Latvia | 3.90 | 2.65 | 47 |
| Poland | 3.32 | 2.48 | 34 |
| Lithuania | 3.13 | 2.09 | 50 |

Direct pay: Remuneration for hours actually worked (Gross earnings excluding special payments minus remuneration for work-free time such as holiday or national holidays);   
Additional staffing costs: Labour costs minus direct pay. Components of the additional staffing costs include remuneration for time off work (holiday, sick days as long as the employer agrees to continue to pay the wages, and special payments for time off work), special payments (for example Christmas and holiday pay, performance-related pay and bonuses), the employer’s social security contributions, expenses related to taking part in the company pension scheme and of training and further training and miscellaneous costs such as severance pay and participation in company structures.

Source: Geopa-Copa

With regard to direct pay, the additional cost ratio ranges from 23% in Ireland to 107% in Spain. It is not possible to guarantee, however, that all additional costs and all scenarios are taken into account. The low figure shown for Ireland is due to the relatively low level of days off work, no special payments and very low employer social security contributions. With values of below 50%, the additional cost ratio in Denmark, the United Kingdom, Poland, Portugal and Latvia are also relatively low. In contrast, the ratio in Spain is over 75% as is the case in Finland, Austria and France. One important cause of these major differences is the different ways of structuring social security. In Denmark, for example, social security is mainly organised through the tax system whereby the employer pays low levels of social security contributions. In France on the other hand, the main share of the burden of financing social security falls directly to the employer – meaning their contributions are relatively high.

## Labour Costs for Various Categories of Employees

When considering working time flexibility it is particularly important to compare the labour costs of permanent employees, seasonal workers and temporary agency workers. Due to the fact that, for example, it is considerably cheaper to employ seasonal workers than permanent employees for carrying out the same work, there is a heavy incentive to alter the volume of work accordingly by employing many seasonal workers in order to adapt to workload fluctuations and the needs of the harvest. Seasonal workers do indeed come with lower labour costs in Europe than permanent employees. There is only Spain and the Netherlands where the labour costs of seasonal workers are higher than those of workers employed on permanent contracts. In the Netherlands, the higher costs of seasonal workers can be explained by the high expenditure on miscellaneous costs and in Spain by the higher collectively-agreed wages. In Denmark, Sweden and France, there are no differences in costs whilst in the remaining seven countries seasonal workers have lower labour costs than permanent employees. The country with by far the most marked difference is Belgium. There, the labour costs of seasonal workers are cheaper by over 5 euros than for permanent employees, representing a cost advantage of 36%. The high difference in cost can be explained by the low level of basic pay for seasonal workers as they have no holiday entitlements, limited payments for public holidays and considerably lower social security contributions. According to the Geopa-Copa survey, at 5 to 1, the ratio of seasonal workers to permanent employees in Belgium is relatively high. According to Pocketbook from Eurostat, permanent employees carried out three times as much work as seasonal workers, i.e. the average value in Europe.

Information on the labour costs of temporary agency workers was available for nine countries. Here too, the results were very mixed. In Austria and the Netherlands, the costs were somewhat higher than for permanent employees, costs were lower on the other hand in Finland and lower still in the United Kingdom and Latvia. In the remaining four countries (Denmark, Sweden, France and Spain) the costs of temporary agency workers were just as high as for permanent employees. In comparison with seasonal workers, the costs of temporary agency workers were considerably higher in Finland and Austria and they were only found to be cheaper in Spain. In the other six countries there was either no difference at all or only a slight difference in costs

Table 3‑4: Labour Costs According to Employee Categories

For each hour worked in euros in 2012

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Permanent Employees | Seasonal Workers | Part Time Workers | Contractors |
| Denmark | 28.37 | 28.37 | 28.37 | 28.37 |
| Sweden | 23.77 | 23.77 | 23.77 |  |
| United Kingdom | 22.16 | 17.04 | 17.04 | 17.04 |
| Finland | 21.58 | 16.83 | 19.26 | – |
| Austria | 16.63 | 15.84 | 17.42 |  |
| France | 16.61 | 16.61 | 16.61 | 16.61 |
| Netherlands | 15.73 | 17.40 | 17.47 | 14.85 |
| Belgium | 15.19 | 9.77 | – | 17.42 |
| Italy | 13.72 | 12.36 | – | 19.15 |
| Spain | 9.38 | 11.37 | 9.38 | – |
| Latvia | 3.90 | 2.44 | 2.44 | 3.66 |
| Lithuania | 3.13 | 2.61 | – | – |

Earnings data constituted by minimum wages in Belgium and France, agreed earnings in Austria, Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Latvia and Ireland and actual earnings in the United Kingdom, Finland, Italy, Sweden, Lithuania, Denmark, Poland and Hungary, of which the actual earnings have been estimated by Geopa-Copa member organisations for the United Kingdom, Lithuania, Denmark and Poland

Source: Geopa-Copa

This means that overall it is not possible to draw up a definitive ranking for all countries for the labour costs of different employee categories. Permanent employees were mostly found to have the highest labour costs. There are, however, exceptions. In the Netherlands and Spain, for example, the labour costs of seasonal workers were higher than for permanent employees. In Austria, temporary agency workers had higher labour costs than those employed on a permanent basis.

# Working Time Flexibility

In theory there are many different ways of incorporating the concept of flexibility into work volumes. If the aim is to maintain a steady number of employees over the course of the year, it is important to ensure that the annual working time is as flexible as possible. Questions must then be asked as to what the upper limits of the daily and weekly working time are, whether and to what extent long working hours can be offset, for example, during harvest time by time off in lieu during times when the workload is less heavy or whether overtime must be paid. If this does not achieve the required level of flexibility or if there are more efficient methods than working with the regular workforce, then the employment of seasonal or temporary agency workers can be considered. At that stage it is crucial to know under which conditions these workers can be employed and with what degree of flexibility their working time can be arranged. Finally, there is the option of allocating certain tasks to contractors. Then the question arises as to how flexible temporary agency workers can be and what the outsourcing exercise will cost.

## Length of Core Working Hours

When comparing the standard weekly working time, it seems that by and large there are no major differences between the countries: In the vast majority of cases, the collectively-agreed weekly working time is between 38 and 40 hours. The 40-hour week is the most widespread model; it is found in half of the countries studied. In three countries, the weekly target was 39 and/or 38 hours. At the lower end of the scale is Denmark with a 37-hour week and France with its statutory 35-hour week. In five countries (Belgium, Finland, Sweden, Lithuania and Latvia) the 40-hour working week is regulated by law, and in France the 35-hour working week is enshrined in law. In these countries, working time is considerably less than prescribed by the EU’s rules on working time with a maximum working time of 48 hours.

Figure 4‑1: Collectively-agreed Core Working Hours in Agriculture

in hours, figures from 2013

Source: Geopa-Copa

Translator’s note: List of countries in 5-1: Hungary, Austria, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Portugal, Finland, Germany, Italy, United Kingdom, Ireland, Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Denmark, France

## Seasonal Adaptation of Working Time and Overtime

Many countries have the option of varying the working time on a seasonal basis without having to pay overtime automatically:

* Germany: different rules apply from region to region. For example, 46 hours are worked for eight weeks, 36 hours are worked for ten weeks and 40 hours are worked for the remainder to reach a yearly average of (approximately) 40 hours. There can also be fluctuations of between 37 and 60 hours per week.
* Austria: The weekly working time may be made more flexible if the collective agreement allows. Many collective agreements make it possible to have weekly working hours of between 35 or 32 hours and 45 or 48 hours respectively with a maximum average working time period (it must result in a 40-hour working week on average) of 52 calendar weeks. In such an agreement wages are paid on the basis of 40 hours of full time employment; overtime hours do not accrue. Because of the peaks in workload in agriculture, however, (harvest, for example) a maximum of 60 hours per week can be worked. Any working hours that go above the normal working time of 40 hours (or the normal working time for this period as agreed in an average working time agreement) are to be compensated by an overtime surcharge of 50% or time off in lieu at a ratio of 1:1.5. For any overtime/working time at night (19.00 to 5.00) and on Sundays and public holidays, an (overtime) surcharge of 100% must be paid or time off in lieu must be granted at a ratio of 1:2.
* Spain: Here, for example, it may be agreed that longer working days are to be compensated for by up to nine hours of flexitime or days with shorter working hours in order to reach an average of 39 hours per week. Additionally, on the basis of seasonal circumstances, the weekly working time can be extended by up to 20 hours. Simultaneously, it is also possible to have a shorter working week.
* Belgium: At farm level, working time can be agreed for up to eleven hours per day and up to 50 hours per week. In agriculture and horticulture, however, the yearly average of 38 hours per week must be respected. Employers must incorporate rules on flexibility into the farm’s working regulations and add on the working hour possibilities over the course of the year. Seasonal employees, however, can be employed on the basis of a daily contract for eleven hours that is constantly renewed thus making them not only less expensive in terms of labour costs than permanent employees but also offering a higher degree of flexibility.
* United Kingdom: “Zero-hours contracts” made up purely of on call time but not in the agricultural sector itself.
* Finland: Within one year (52 weeks) the average weekly working time must amount to 40 hours. Within these parameters, the daily working hours are free to fluctuate between four and ten hours and working time can be distributed over a six-day week. In weeks with longer working hours the working time can be offset by granting time off in lieu during other weeks. In order for the employer to be able to use this system, he/she must make a working time plan and shift pattern available to his/her employees in advance.
* Netherlands: On the basis of collective agreements, a maximum of 42 hours per week can be worked without incurring overtime pay. The Working Time Directive (ATW) makes it possible to work a maximum of 60 hours in one week, an average of 55 hours over a four-week period and an average of 48 hours over 16 weeks.
* Portugal: Regular working hours can be extended by up to four hours per day and result in a total of 60 hours per week. Overtime hours can reach a maximum of 200 hours per year and may be compensated for by time off in lieu, contract extensions or cash payments (without any increase in contributions).
* Italy: The collective agreement stipulates that the normal weekly working time of 39 hours is calculated as an average over a maximum period of twelve months. During this period, the weekly working time can be increased for one or several weeks (and consequently reduced in other weeks) in which the upper limit of 75 hours per year must be respected with a maximum weekly working time of 44 hours.
* Sweden: An average of 38.5 hours for an animal keeper and 40 hours for a tractor driver within a balancing out period of four months.
* Lithuania: There is some flexibility over working time which can be agreed with the employer but it must not exceed 48 hours per week.
* Denmark: Standard working hours between 6am and 6pm.
* France: There is a system of annual working time with weekly working time free to fluctuate between 0 and 48 hours, under certain conditions. The 35 hours worked (hours of modulation) can be offset at any time by hours below this level (hours of compensation). France, however, does not have the same notion of flexibility as other countries. The system is regulated very strictly which places severe limitations upon its use – particularly on the basis of the programming as described under point 4.4.
* Latvia: Normal working hours amount to 40 hours per week. The employment contract lays down both the (normal) working hours as well as regulations concerning overtime. Over a period of four months, overtime may not exceed 144 hours. Young people under the age of 18, women who are pregnant or breastfeeding or who had their last child during the past year may not work any overtime hours. Often a six-day working week with reduced daily hours can be agreed upon.
* Hungary: With working time accounts, the weekly hours worked can reach a maximum total of 56 hours. The average of 40 hours, however, must be respected.
* Ireland: There is a wide margin of discretion for employees and employers in order to agree upon flexible working times.
* Poland: Flexible working times over a balancing out period of four months. Since August 2013, this time period can now be extended to twelve months. The employer must request the approval of the company’s trade union in order to do this, where applicable. The employer is then required to provide his/her employees with a written or electronic version of the working time arrangements.

New regulations entered into force in Latvia on 1 June 2014 especially for seasonal workers:

* Seasonal workers pay a reduced rate of income tax of 15% (instead of the customary 24%) but at least 70 euro cents per day. The reduced rate only applies for 65 days per year although seasonal workers can be employed for a maximum of 10 months. Income earned per season must not exceed 3,000 euros overall. Tractor drivers and those employed in animal husbandry are exempt. The taxable seasonal work must occur between the beginning of April and the end of November.
* In order to avoid any abuse of these provisions, the seasonal worker must not be employed as a permanent employee at the same firm at least four months before commencing work as a seasonal worker.

There are only a handful of countries where formal working time accounts are used with plus or minus hours entered alongside the standard working time. There are no such accounts in Austria, Spain, Sweden, Denmark or Poland. In Finland, France and the Netherlands working time accounts are found occasionally. In Hungary, every other farm has working time accounts. Working time accounts are prevalent in the United Kingdom and Latvia where companies are required to have them by law. In the remainder of the countries, there are accounts but the extent to which they are used is not known. Where working time accounts do exist, the majority of them have a balancing out period of one year. Hungary is the exception to this rule where the account must be balanced out after six months. Due to the strong seasonal fluctuations in workload, this time period is perceived to be too short.

If extra hours are worked in addition to the core working hours and the overtime is not offset by flexible working hours, there must be compensation for overtime in the form of payment or time off. In the majority of countries, the overtime rate is 50%. This rate is 25% in Italy, in France it applies for the first eight hours of overtime in that particular week and in Portugal for the first hour of the day. At 33%, the wage mark-up for overtime is also relatively low in Ireland. In Germany, the overtime top-up varies depending on the day and the region by between 20% and 150%. The maximum rate, however, is only paid when the overtime hours are being worked on a public holiday. Higher rates of overtime pay on Sundays and public holidays can also typically be found in other countries. Overtime hours are especially costly in Latvia. The rate there is twice as high as a regular working hour.

## Use of Temporary Contract Workers and Outsourcing of Contracts to Contractors

One additional possibility when dealing with changes in activity consists of employing extra short term or temporary workers during times of high activity. As opposed to seasonal workers, recruitment is outsourced to a business offering these services. Generally, not least of all due to cost reasons, temporary workers are employed relatively infrequently:

* In Germany, Austria, Spain, Belgium, Sweden, France and Latvia, temporary workers are employed rarely or not at all. Austria, Belgium and France made explicit reference to the higher costs involved. In Belgium, for example, VAT at 21% has to be applied to a temporary worker’s wages.
* In Italy, temporary workers were mainly used during the harvest. Due to the fact that compared to self-employed workers the cost is 20 to 30% higher, very little use is made of this flexibility mechanism. Instead the agricultural product tends to be sold unharvested. That means that the buyer of the cereals, for example, is responsible for bringing in the harvest him/herself. It is increasingly common for the harvest to be put out as a service tender.
* In Poland, temporary workers are employed by agricultural holdings during the harvest. It is more common, however, to rely on support from family members or neighbours.
* In Finland, temporary workers are used to perform certain specific tasks. This is not very common, however, and it tends to be more used in horticulture. The wages that the agency pays to its employees must be based on the collective agreements signed in agriculture.
* In Hungary, temporary workers are mainly used by family farms.
* For the Netherlands, Lithuania, Portugal and Denmark, no information was available on the use of temporary employees. Workers employed on a fixed-term basis, either as seasonal workers or temporary agency workers, are very likely to be employed in the Netherlands and Lithuania. In Lithuania there has actually been a voucher system in place since April 2013 which makes it easier to employ seasonal workers.

Overall, as a flexibility mechanism, temporary work is rarely used in the agriculture sector. Temporary workers appear to take on less importance for agricultural enterprises than the seasonal workers that are recruited by the farms themselves. This may be down to the fact that many farmers have established close ties with the seasonal workers who regularly work on the farm during the harvest. This reduces the costs of recruitment and by building a working relationship that is founded on trust, the farm can be relatively certain of maintaining high standards of work.

## Contractual Aspects and Implementation of Working Time Flexibility

Overall it would appear that in many countries there is a high level of flexibility in formal working time. However it is sometimes restricted by strict provisions governing how it is contractually implemented in practice. This is supported by a number of specific examples which were discussed during the seminar in Kaunas:

* France: The annual working time system as introduced in point 4.2 can be seen as being equivalent to a partial form of flexibility. The framework of this system, however, is rather rigid and is complex to use. Before each flexibility period (maximum of 12 months), a detailed programme must be drawn up containing a list of the employees concerned, the number of hours of modulation, the periods of intensive work and reduced work etc. This means that the framework is strictly demarcated and does not allow for any adaptation to changing circumstances.
* Poland: An amendment to the Labour Code which entered into force on 23.08.2013 introduced new provisions on the organisation of working time and offers greater legal certainty. Working times were previously considered flexible but were widely regarded by labour inspectors to be unlawful. This legal certainty, however, brings with it a number of formal requirements: the allocation of working hours must be notified at least one month in advance and the employees affected must be informed by one week in advance at the latest.
* Hungary: Employment law has also undergone reform in Hungary. There are new possibilities for introducing greater flexibility in working time such as being on call, job-sharing, i.e. sharing one job between two employees, the sharing of employees (where one employee works for several firms at the same time) and teleworking.
* Latvia and the United Kingdom: Farms in these countries are obliged to have working time accounts in place. In the United Kingdom in particular, there are no formal checks carried out by labour inspectors (inspectors only visit in the event of problems) but there can be harsh fines if any violations are detected.
* Latvia: for seasonal workers in the fruit and vegetable sector, reciprocal agreements can be made between employees and employers which must be notified to the state tax authorities by the time the work starts at the latest.
* Italy: A maximum of 75 hours are granted for flexibility, with the weekly working time being limited to 44 hours. Overtime can amount to a maximum of two hours per day, twelve hours per week and 250 hours per year.
* Austria: Flexible working time must be agreed in advance in the form of a company agreement and, in the absence of a works council, by a written individual agreement. The employer has no authority. The employer does have authority however, with regard to overtime when this has been agreed or when there is an imminent danger. Here too, however, it can result in differences having to be assessed between employers and employees.

# Conclusion

By undertaking this project on labour costs and working time flexibility with support from the European Commission, Geopa-Copa has addressed topics that had not previously been granted sufficient coverage by official statistics. This means that the project is very important as it provides companies and employers with highly relevant information. There are, however, limitations with regard to the precision of the information provided here as the member organisations who were part of the survey themselves have to refer to reliable output data if they want to produce precise information on labour costs, for example. Regularly taking stock of labour costs through a survey could lead to repetition but also to improvements in quality. As such, the values mentioned here relating to the amount and structure of labour costs are associated with greater (statistical) uncertainty than, for example, the values based on labour cost surveys that the European Commission discloses for the manufacturing sector. Nevertheless the results presented may not apply to each country individually but rather can be used in their entirety as an approximate guideline on the total amount of labour costs. There appears to be a high level of differentiation with some very high costs in Scandinavian countries and a comparatively low level of labour costs in the newer Member States of the European Union, whereby labour costs in the most expensive location (Denmark) are more than nine times more expensive than in the least expensive location (Lithuania). From a qualitative point of view, this produces a result that is similar to that of industry although it ought to be easier to compare agricultural products internationally than for industrial goods in which quality aspects, technological advantage and brand image all play an important role.

There are many ways of making working time arrangements more flexible. Firstly the working hours of permanent employees can be made more flexible, secondly seasonal or temporary agency workers can be recruited during times of increased activity and thirdly work can be outsourced to contractors. Seasonal workers are employed on a regular basis. In many countries there are even considerably more seasonal workers than permanent employees but due to the fact that seasonal workers are usually only employed for a short period of time the permanent employees perform the lion’s share of the work. Temporary workers and contractors do not seem to play a major role. One notable exception to this is Italy where the harvest is increasingly being put out for service tenders or the agricultural product is even sold in unharvested form.

The working time of employees themselves can often be very flexible. The possibilities offered by modulation are in theory generous although they are partially restricted by strict formal requirements such as having to present an exact timetable in advance. On a more critical note, in some countries the various categories of employees, for example, permanent employees, seasonal workers and temporary workers are treated differently in law. As a result this leads to differing labour costs and unequal opportunities for making working time flexible. It creates incentives for certain groups of employees and favours certain ways of making working time flexible and can even lead to economic inefficiency. The method that is preferable from a social policy perspective remains to be decided. At first glance, a fixed employment contract offers the highest degree of job security. Temporary agency workers too, however, are usually permanent workers for the company offering the services and can represent an important buffer for those employed permanently on the farm in maintaining employment in a volatile business activity. The same applies to seasonal workers whose chances of being re-employed are often good. Many farms maintain contact with their seasonal workers in the interim times when there is no employment and often employ the same people time and time again.

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**Annex Questionnaire on Labour Costs and Working Time Flexibility**

Questionnaire on Labour Costs and Working Time Flexibility

**Part I: Employment in Agriculture**

In table 1 (below) please enter details on employment, number of employees and sectors that the business is involved in. Please also indicate the sources of your data (public administration, official statistics, social security treasury, your own personal views or other). Then classify the data according to the main activity of the business entered in column 1. **Agricultural enterprises** are divided into three categories: producers of fruit, vegetables and flowers; wine producers and producers of other crops and livestock farmers. There is also a category for **agricultural contractors**. This refers to companies in the service sector who, after having signed a contract with an agricultural business, undertake to perform an agreed task (for example harvesting x ha of cereals). This is different from **temporary employment agencies**. These agencies supply agricultural businesses with employees who are then the company’s responsibility.

Column A: Number of employers. Please enter the total number of farms that employ at least one employee, irrespective of whether they are permanent or seasonal workers.

Column B: Permanent employees. Please enter the number of permanent employees. This refers to workers who work throughout the whole year and therefore essentially have an open-ended contract. Seasonal interruptions or fluctuations in working time are also possible.

Columns C to F: Seasonal employees. This part of the questionnaire refers to employees who are employed for a relatively short period of time (between one day and eight months) to carry out works that usually take place at approximately the same time each year (e.g. a harvest, pruning of vines and fruit trees, the fattening of geese).  
In column C please provide the total number of seasonal employees. In columns D to F please provide the total number according to the length of the employment period. In France, for example, in column D seasonal employees who work a maximum of 20 days per year, column E: 21 to 40 days, column F: over 40 days. If, based on the national statistics available, other categories emerge then please mention this in a note. Please try to enter details separately at least for the temporary seasonal workers who only work during one fruit or grape harvest campaign and who are therefore rarely employed for longer than a month.

**Table 1: Number of Employers and Employees**

Please provide the figures for the 2012 yearly average

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Company activity | A  Number of employers | B  Permanent employees | C  Total number of seasonal workers | D  Of which:  Employed for up to 20 days | E  Of which:  Employed for 21 to 40 days | F  Of which:  Employed for over 40 days |
| All agricultural businesses |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Fruit, vegetables, flowers |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Wine-growing |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Other crops and livestock farming |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Agricultural contractors |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Temporary employment agencies |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Landscaping firms |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Forestry companies |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Part II: Labour costs**

The aim of this section is to extract information that is as precise as possible from individual items of data so as to be able to calculate labour costs per hour. Please provide the relevant details on earnings and labour costs for the following categories of employees in Table 2:

* Permanent employees (overall average). If possible, please provide the average values for permanent employees according to the definition provided in Part I. For the purpose of facilitating international comparisons, three important examples of categories of permanent employees are listed:
* Herdsperson. This is a qualified dairy farming employee who milks cows, maintains the stalls and looks after the cows by feeding the animals and attending to their phytosanitary needs.
* Qualified tractor driver. This refers to an employee who is not only capable of driving a tractor but is also able to perform maintenance on the equipment.
* Qualified employee in the horticulture sector. This refers to an employee who works in greenhouses and is responsible for the planting, care and protection of plants.
* Employees from agricultural contractors. Please state here, where applicable, the average values for employees from agricultural contractors (according to the definition provided in Part I).
* Employees from temporary employment agencies. Please provide here, where applicable, the average values for employees from temporary employment agencies (in accordance with the definition in Part I).
* Seasonal employees. Here, please provide information on the average values for seasonal employees in accordance with the definition in Part I.

Unless otherwise stated, please provide data that refers to the situation as of 1 January 2013. Please also supply the date sources (public administration, official statistics, social security treasury, your own personal views or other).

Column A: Minimum wage. Here please state the legally agreed minimum wage per hour. If there is no sector-specific minimum wage, please state the general legal minimum wage instead.

Column B: Collectively agreed gross earnings. Here please provide the gross hourly wage that has been agreed through collective bargaining or, if no hourly wage has been agreed, the collectively agreed gross monthly wage.

Column C: Collectively agreed special payments. Here please consider all special payments that have been agreed through collective bargaining (for example, additional holiday pay, end of year bonus, Christmas bonus, employees’ saving schemes). Please add up all types of special payments and state their value – according to what is stated in the collective agreement– in the national currency or as a multiple of a monthly salary (for example, none, half of a monthly salary or a full monthly salary etc.).

Column D: Effective gross income. Looking at the average for 2012 please state here the effective gross income for each remunerated hour (not including special payments). If the only information available includes special payments, please mention this and provide the gross hourly pay including special payments. If no figures per hour are available, provide the gross monthly earnings (if possible without special payments but if the only figures are inclusive of special payments, then please mention this). If no data whatsoever is available on the effective gross income, please give, if possible, an estimate of how much as a percentage the effective hourly wage is over or under the (hourly) wage as agreed though collective bargaining (for example +10 percent, -10 percent).

Column E: Effective special payments. Here, please provide details of any special payments for each remunerated hour, alternatively if this is not possible, the special payments per year. If no accurate figures are available, please give an estimate of how many months’ salary are usually paid as special payments (for example none, half of a monthly salary or a full monthly salary etc.).

Column F: Holiday pay. Please provide the average holiday entitlement in working days (for example, 30 days for 6 weeks of holiday in a 5-day week) including paid leave granted for other purposes (e.g. special permission to take leave when moving house, getting married, works meetings etc.).

Column G: Public holidays. Here, please provide the average number of public holidays that fall on working days.

Column H: Sick leave. Please state the number of days of sick leave that are paid for by the employer. If the continued remuneration during

sick leave is paid for by social security, please enter “zero”.

Column I: Social security. Please state here the rate (as a percentage of gross annual earnings) that is paid by the employer in social security contributions (including accident insurance and any possible taxes). Please consider any deductions in the low-wage sector by directly factoring them in for the relevant jobs or by mentioning any derogations that apply to low earnings in a side note. Please also mention any income thresholds for social security contributions.

Column J: Miscellaneous costs. Here, please state the percentage (with regard to gross annual earnings) of miscellaneous costs (training costs, cost of company pensions, redundancy costs and operational installations are all important items). If no exact figures are available, please try to provide an estimate and clearly label it as such.

**Table 2: Structure of labour costs**

Please enter figures that reflect the situation as of 1 January 2013 for collectively agreed and legal provisions and the 2012 annual average for the effective values (effective earnings, holiday and sick leave).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | A Minimum wage | B Collectively agreed gross earnings | C Collectively agreed special payments | D Effective gross income | E Effective special payments | F Holiday pay | G Public holidays | H Sick leave | I  Social security | J Miscellaneous costs |
| Unit | In national currency | In national currency | In national currency or as a multiple of a monthly wage | In national currency | In national currency or as a multiple of a monthly wage | In working days | In working days | In working days (only when paid for by the employer) | As a percentage of the gross yearly earnings | As a percentage of the gross yearly earnings |
| Permanent employees |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Herdsperson |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Qualified tractor driver |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Employees from agricultural contractors |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Temporary employees |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Seasonal employees |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Part III: Working time and Working Time Flexibility**

Please enter the following information for the 2012 annual average in Table 3.

Row 1: Planned weekly working time. Please indicate how long the average planned weekly working time is in hours. Please state whether working time is regulated by law, by means of a collective agreement or at company level.

Row 2: Flexible weekly working time at company level. Please indicate whether the weekly working time as stated in row 1 varies at company level (hypothetical example: the collectively-agreed working time is 38 hours but can vary from 35 to 40 according to order volumes at company level) and if so please provide details of how the rules apply.

Row 3: Individual flexible weekly working time. Please indicate whether the weekly working time as stated in row 1 varies for certain groups of employees (for example, longer working times for qualified employees).

Row 4: Paid overtime. Please indicate the number of hours of paid overtime per week.

Row 5: Overtime premiums. Specify the amount of the overtime premiums as a percentage of the remuneration for one hour of regular working time.

Row 6: Time off in lieu for overtime. Specify the average number of overtime hours per week that are compensated for by time off (for example by granting additional days off).

Row 7: Lost overtime. Please provide, if possible, an estimate of the number of hours of overtime that have been accumulated but lost– i.e. any hours of overtime that have neither been compensated for in days in lieu nor through payment.

Row 8: Seasonal variations in working time. Please indicate whether weekly working time that has been agreed through collective agreements or at company level can vary on a seasonal basis and, if so, please give details about how the rules surrounding this apply (for example shorter working time in winter, longer working time during the harvest).

Row 9: Working time accounts. Please state whether in your country it is common practice to use working time accounts. If so, please state the percentage of firms that use working time accounts. If there is no precise data about the prevalence of these accounts, please try to provide an estimate, clearly labelling it as such.

Row 10: Working time account arrangements. Please provide details about how working time accounts work in practice. Since there is presumably no single unified model in your country, please provide details for the most widely used model. If applicable please give details of an alternative model if there are two widely-used models of working time accounts.  
a: Balancing-out period. Please specify the period over which the working time account must be balanced out (for example one year, if the working time account always needs to be at “zero hours” on 1 July or reach a value that is below the maximum possible limit). Please indicate “no time limit” if working time accounts are able to fluctuate permanently within a certain range.  
b: Working time “corridors” (the ability to reduce or extend working time within certain limits). Please provide the values between which the working time account can fluctuate (for example –50 hours up to +100 hours, so 50 hours debit to 100 banked hours).

Row 11: Flexibility through working time. Please state whether temporary workers are used in your country to make working time more flexible. If not, please state whether there is no demand among companies for this or whether there are too many obstacles to use temporary workers (for example prohibitions or excessively high lower wage limits).

Row 12: Miscellaneous instruments. Please list here, if applicable, any miscellaneous instruments used to make working time more flexible.

Row 13: Costs. Please indicate whether, in your country, increased working time flexibility comes at the price of higher labour costs. If firms want to make working time more flexible than usual, do they have to pay their employees higher wages? If so, please provide examples.