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# Living longer, working better - active ageing in Europe

2012 is the European year of active ageing and solidarity between generations. It offers us all a chance to reflect on how Europeans are living longer and staying healthier than ever before — and to realise the opportunities that represents. During the course of 2012 Eurofound will bring you more data, research findings and policy-pointers on active ageing, providing you with insights into developments at EU, national and company level.

<http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/resourcepacks/activeageing.htm>

## The resource pack covers the following issues:

- Europe's coming of age
- Promoting good working conditions
- Demographic change
- Older workers in the recession
- Work after retirement

### Working longer, living better – Promoting good working conditions



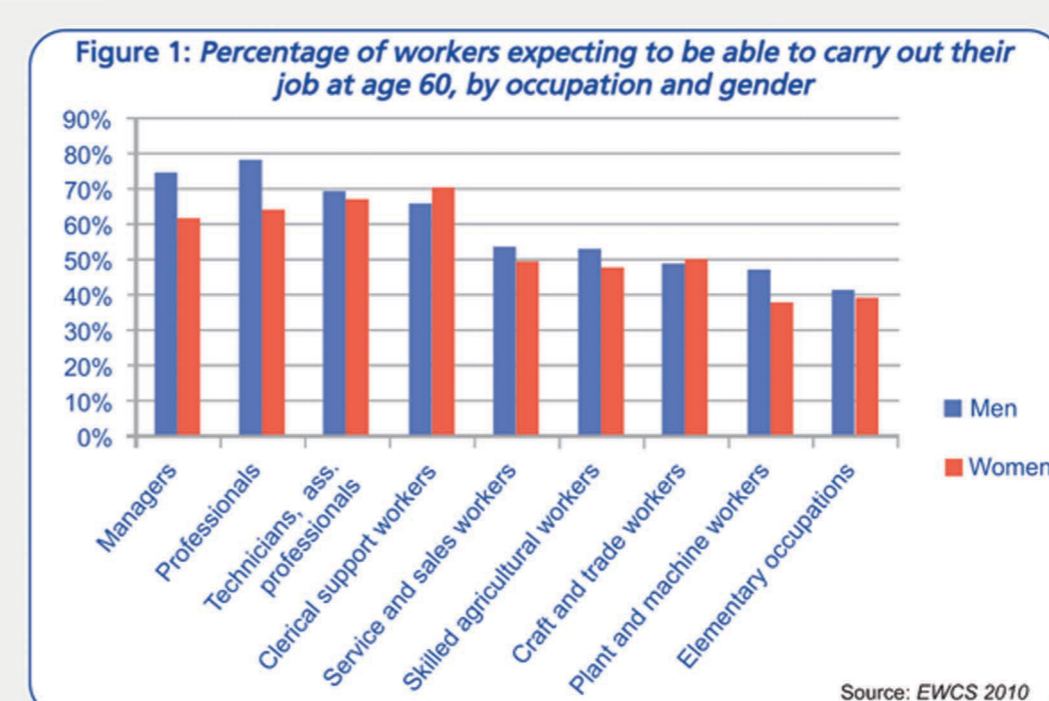
For most people work is not only a source of income but also an important aspect of their personal identity and their social life. When workers grow older, the positive elements of work often retain their importance, but for many it becomes more difficult to do their jobs. European companies have the challenge of managing a diverse staff and allowing and encouraging them to work until retirement age. Important issues are not only preserving the health of the workers but also tackling discrimination, facilitating a good work-life balance, and supporting workers in keeping their skills up to date. On an institutional level, sustainable social security systems require that people remain in the workforce as long as possible. Consequently, many national and European policies have attempted to deal with the effects of an ageing society over the last decades.

**Nearly 60% of workers believe they will be able to carry out their job at the age of 60.**

The latest findings from the European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS 2010) provide some good news in this respect: they show that the percentage of workers in the EU27 that think they will be able to do their current job at the age of 60 has risen marginally from 57% in 2000 to 59% in 2010.

#### Differences in the ability to work at a later age

There are, however, big differences between countries: over 70% of workers in the Netherlands and Germany feel they will be able to do their job at 60, compared to only 26% of workers in Slovenia. These percentages closely correspond to the actual percentage of older workers in the respective countries. Out of the ten Member States with the lowest percentage of workers expecting to be able to do their job at age 60, seven are also in the bottom ten in terms of the proportion of workers aged 50 and older in the workforce.



The perceived sustainability of jobs varies considerably across sectors. Only in the financial services sector does the percentage of workers who think they could continue working in the same job until a late age exceed 70%. By contrast, in agriculture, wholesale, retail, food and accommodation, industry and transport, only slightly more than half of workers feel the same way.

Not only do countries and sectors differ, so do types of occupation: workers in high-skilled, white-collar occupation are much more likely to think that they will be able to do the same job until older age than workers in manual occupations that require a lower skill level. With regard to perceived sustainability, occupations can roughly be divided into two groups: managers, professionals, technicians and clerical support workers on the one hand, and service and sales workers, skilled agricultural and fishery workers, craft and trades workers, plant and machine operators, and workers in elementary occupations on the other. Unsurprisingly, workers in the latter group are much less positive about their job sustainability than workers in the former group (Figure 1). Generally, men and women in the same type of occupation do not differ much in terms of their perception of job sustainability. There are, however, some exceptions: male managers and professionals are much more positive about being able to perform their jobs at 60 than their female counterparts. The same gender difference can be found among plant and machinery assemblers and operators.

