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USAGE OF STATISTICAL DATA FOR GENDER ANALYSIS AT NATIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

Family and work balance in everyday life: a European comparison

Note by the Federal Statistical Office, Switzerland

Summary

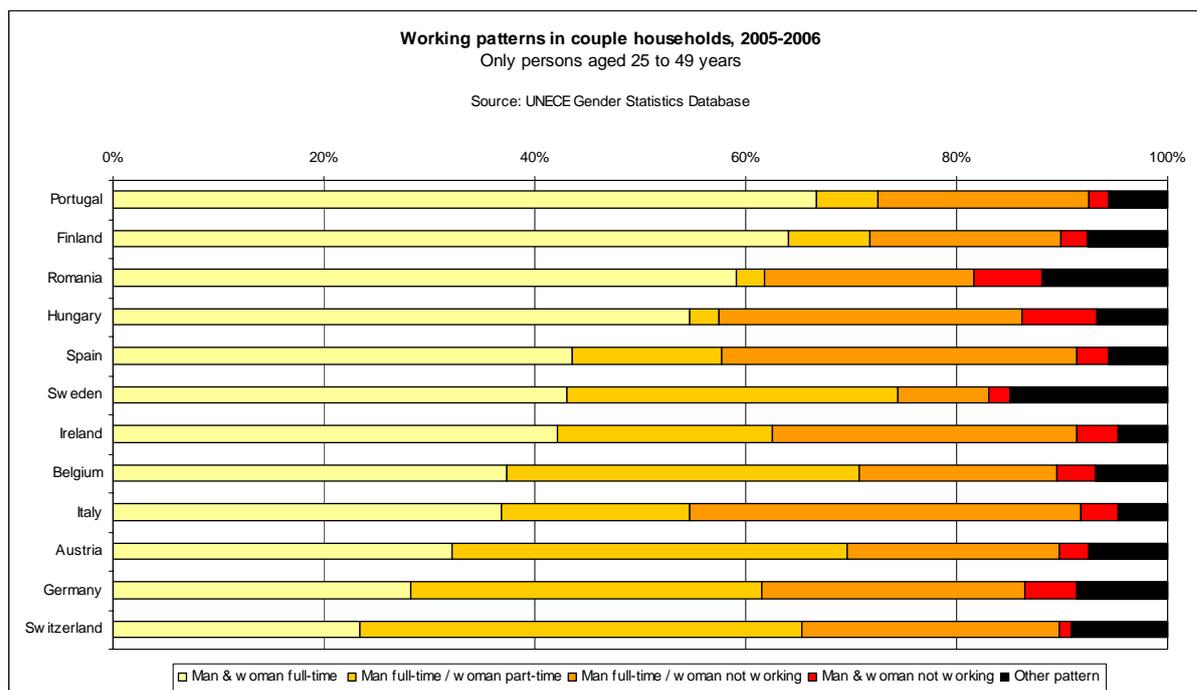
In this paper the issue of reconciliation between family and professional life is addressed. Using data from UNECE Gender Statistics Database, the author examines and compares working patterns in couples, time spent in paid and unpaid work, and part time work in various UNECE countries. From the analysis, it is concluded that mothers are faced with higher demands when combining family and professional life compared to fathers.

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The challenge of combining family and professional life is one that affects the whole family. Even in the western countries of Europe, it is now increasingly the case that a single earned income is insufficient to meet the needs of a family; as a result both parents often have to work from financial necessity. In addition, women today have better levels of education and often do not wish to entirely give up their careers to have a family.
2. Although ever more women, particularly mothers, are now economically active, this should not disguise the fact that most women in many different countries, including Switzerland, work part-time and, if there are small children in the household, the occupation rate is comparatively low (less than 50%). Conversely, most men, especially fathers, work full-time, which is why the burden of organising work and family mainly falls to mothers. For both mothers and fathers, a successful reconciliation of work and family life is still not certain in most countries. Yet for mothers the issue of managing both family and employment has, in general, much further reaching consequences than for fathers since it is still mainly mothers who take on the primary responsibility for the raising of and caring for children.
3. This paper deals exclusively with reconciliation in the narrower sense of the balance between family and professional life. Other life situations which require the combination of, for example, training or education with work, or work with caring duties for dependent adults, are not explicitly addressed here, not least because of the lack of data in this respect in the UNECE Gender Statistics Database.

II. WORKING PATTERNS IN COUPLE HOUSEHOLDS

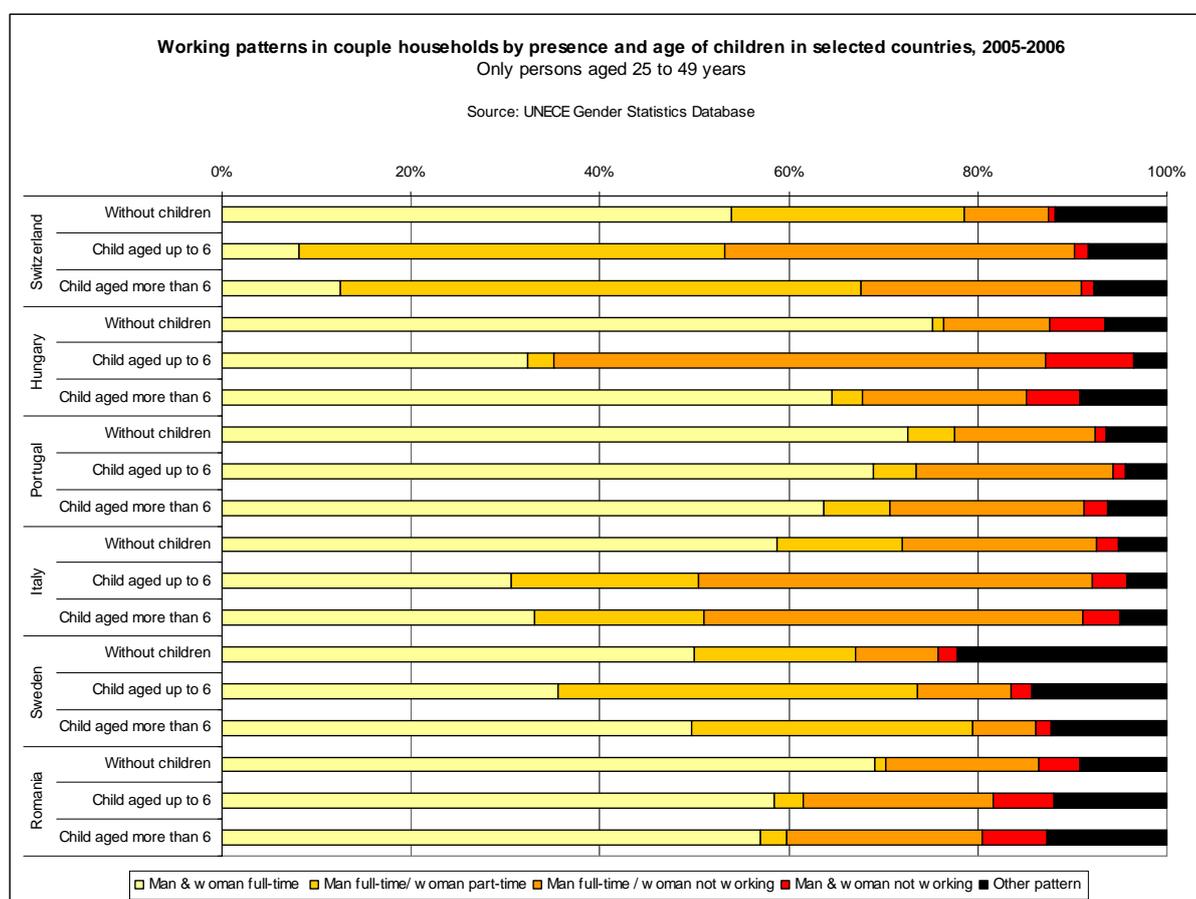
4. Solutions for balancing professional and family life are usually found in the division of labour between the two partners, whereby mothers are now less likely to give up their work or at least only give it up completely for a shorter period. This division of labour is vividly illustrated in couples' working patterns. Here, only households of couples of prime working age (aged between 25 and 49 years) are considered.
5. Irrespective of whether the woman is economically active (full- or part-time), traditional patterns with the man in full-time employment are the most common in almost all countries, occurring in at least 8 in 10 couple households. Hungary and Romania are exceptions since part-time work hardly features in these countries (and they show relatively high levels of unemployment, particularly of men).



6. By examining working patterns in countries for which current figures are available it is possible to ascertain groups of countries with similar patterns.
- (a) In Switzerland, Austria, Germany and Belgium there is a high proportion of couple households where the man works full-time and the woman part-time (between 41.9% in Switzerland and 33.2% in Germany). Of all the countries studied, Switzerland has the lowest proportion of the both partners working full-time pattern (23.4%), followed by Germany (28.3%) and Austria (32.2%). Furthermore, after Sweden (4.3%), Switzerland has the highest occurrence of the both partners working part-time pattern compared to the other countries (CH: 3.4%).
 - (b) Portugal and Finland demonstrate a high proportion of couple households where both partners work full-time (66.7% and 64.0% respectively) and a relatively low percentage where the man works full-time and the woman part-time.
 - (c) Italy, Spain and Ireland are marked by more traditional working patterns, in other words a high percentage of couple households where the man works full-time and the woman is economically inactive (37.1%, 33.6% and 28.9% respectively). Compared to the other countries, this pattern is most common in Italy, and is, together with the pattern whereby both partners work full-time, the most widespread pattern in the country (around 37% respectively).
 - (d) Rarer patterns occur more frequently in Sweden than in other countries, such as both partners working part-time (4.3%), or the man working part-time and the woman full-time (4.5%). Of couple households with persons aged between 25 and 49, Sweden has the lowest percentage of women who are economically inactive among the countries investigated (12.8%).
 - (e) In general, part-time work hardly features in Romania and Hungary, neither for men nor women. As a consequence there are scarcely any couple households in which the woman works part-time alongside a man in full-time employment (only 2.7% in both countries). It is most common for both partners to work full-time (Romania 59.1% and Hungary 54.7%). In addition, the two working patterns of *the non-working man and*

the woman in full-time employment and two non-working partners are relatively common in comparison to other countries. This is in connection with the relatively high unemployment rate in these two countries since – in the database – both inactive and unemployed persons are considered as not working.

7. The life situation of couple households changes fundamentally as soon as children are present in the household. In Switzerland, Austria and Germany the pattern of full-time employment of both partners is much less widespread in households with children than those without. If there are children under 6 years of age in the household, the *man working full-time/woman part-time* pattern is common along with the "*sole male breadwinner*" pattern, in which the man works full-time and the woman is economically inactive (in a good 3 to 4 in 10 households). Mothers take up employment again as the children's age increases, although this is often on a part-time basis.



8. This familiar change-over to the "*sole male breadwinner*" pattern can also be observed in Hungary and Finland, particularly in households with children under 6 and with the pattern especially marked in Hungary. The change-over is much less obvious in Portugal, with the proportion of couples working full-time, even with children, remaining relatively high. The percentage of households in which the woman works part-time alongside a man in full-time employment is low in the three countries in all family situations (under 1 in 10).

9. The phenomenon characterised by the shift from *both partners working full-time* to the "*sole male breadwinner*" pattern when there are children in the household is also noticeable in Italy and Spain, although this is much less pronounced than in Switzerland, Germany and

Austria. There is also no significant difference between couple households with children under 6 and those with children over 6 in terms of the parents' participation in the labour force.

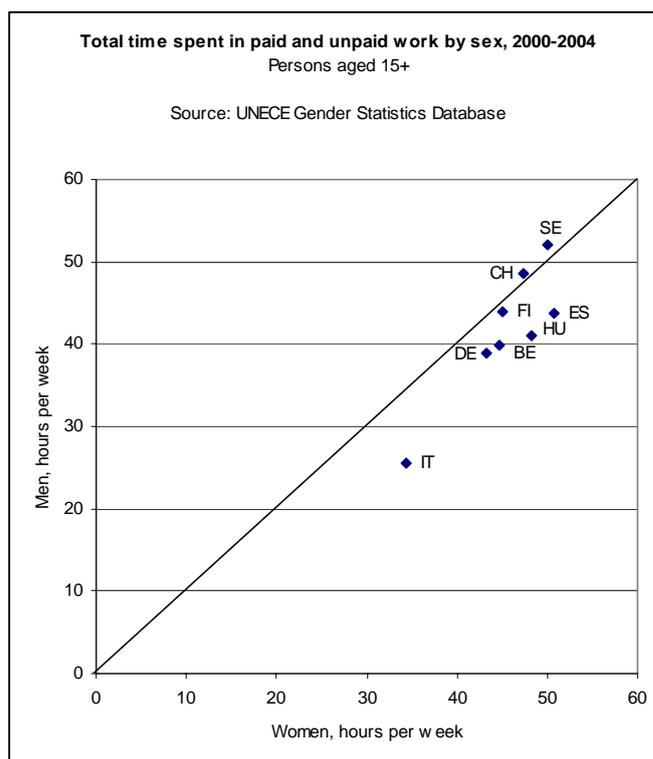
10. A different picture is painted for Sweden and Belgium. Here, the presence of children in the household does not affect the employment of women but their degree of occupation, with women reducing their employment from full-time to part-time work rather than withdrawing from the labour force altogether. This can be seen in a decline in the *both partners working full-time* pattern in favour of the *man full-time/woman part-time* pattern. The percentage of mothers who do not participate in the labour force remains low in Sweden, including in households with children.

11. In Romania only very small differences are noticeable between couples with and those without children, and no difference at all is recorded in the working patterns of parents in relation to the age of the children.

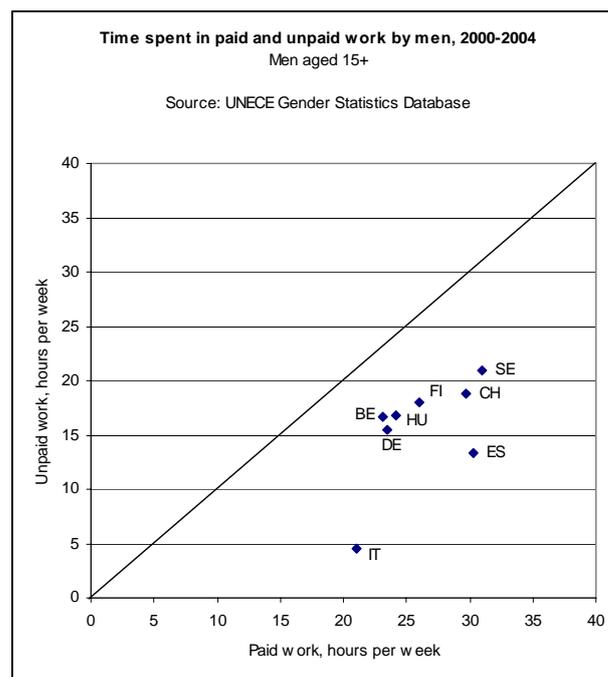
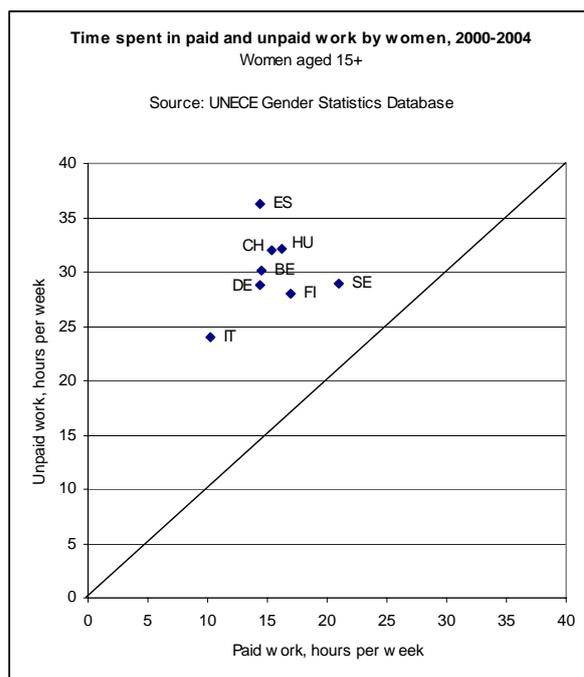
12. It is striking that the presence of children does not lead, for instance, to an increase in egalitarian or new working patterns (e.g. *both partners working part-time* or *the woman working full-time and the man part-time or not working*), rather there is a greater tendency for prevalent, traditional patterns to be reinforced. Alternative patterns occur principally in couple households without children.

III. PAID AND UNPAID WORK

13. In many family and couple households, there exists a clearly gendered division of roles. Although the paid employment of mothers has risen in some countries such as Switzerland since the 1990s and has been relatively high in others for some time, caring for home and family still lies within the woman's or mother's domain. In Switzerland, however, it is noticeable that fathers have invested more time in caring for home and family over the last few years alongside their (usually full-time) employment; this is particularly the case if there are small children in the household. The total amount of time that fathers spend performing paid and unpaid work is on the same scale as that of mothers.



14. Unpaid work includes caring for home and family, as well as voluntary work. In most countries studied, women shoulder a greater total workload of both paid and unpaid work, apart from Finland, Sweden and Switzerland, where the burden is equally shared between the sexes. Only in Swedish households with children of pre-school age is the total workload of fathers much higher than that of mothers (65 and 60 hours per week respectively). On the other hand, the unequal distribution of paid and unpaid work between women and men follows the same pattern in all the countries without exception: men invest more time in paid work and women more in unpaid work. In Switzerland in 2004 women spent an average of 15 hours and men 30 hours per week carrying out paid work. Men invest only 19 hours per week in unpaid work, while women do 32 hours. The average amount of time per week spent carrying out paid work may seem low. The explanation for this is that the figures are based on the total population aged 15 or more, including people of retirement age. The statutory retirement age thus has an important influence on the average number of hours spent doing paid work. The low total workload of Italian women and men, for example, is at least partially attributable to this cause.

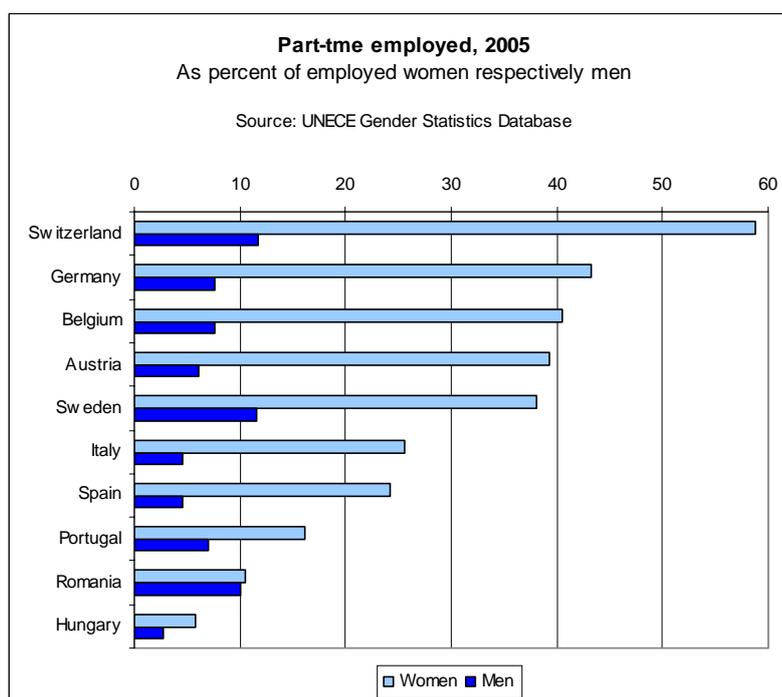


IV. PART-TIME WORK

15. A possibility for solving or mitigating the problem of work/family balance is part-time work. This is, for example, one important reason for the high labour force participation rate of women in Switzerland. Switzerland has the highest percentage of women working part-time (58.8%) among the countries under consideration. In Germany, Austria, Belgium and Sweden, around 4 in 10 women in paid employment work part-time. In all the countries, men are far less likely to work part-time than women. In Switzerland and Sweden, nearly 12% of men in employment nonetheless work part-time, thus putting the two countries among the nations with the most men working part-time. Eastern and southern European countries, however, have a lower proportion of part-time workers. This form of work hardly features in Hungary, and in Portugal, Italy and Spain the proportions are relatively small. Likewise Romania has only around 10% of those in paid employment working part-time and is also the only country not to demonstrate a gender gap.

16. With a few exceptions, the trend over the past few years shows a general increase in part-time work which was more pronounced among women than men. This can be interpreted as a positive sign for better reconciliation of professional and private life, but this does not mean that the spread of part-time work has positive repercussions only. This is because working part-time may also be accompanied by job insecurity, poor social welfare provision (e.g. in old age) and fewer opportunities to undertake vocational training or build a career. The exceptions among the countries under investigation comprise Spain, where there have been no notable changes over the years in relation to part-time work, and Romania and Sweden, which have experienced a decline in women undertaking part-time employment.

17. The opportunities for carrying out part-time work in the different countries are reflected in couples' division of labour, particularly if children are present, as indicated previously in the section on working patterns.



V. OUTLOOK

18. In conclusion, it can be established that, compared to fathers, mothers are faced with much higher demands when combining family and professional life since in most cases they are responsible for the household. If, in addition, they wish to take on paid employment, finding a suitable position is dependent on certain conditions – be it in relation to the commute, working hours or flexibility in the case of unforeseen events such as child illness. The fact that mothers are more likely to be economically inactive than fathers supports the assumption that it is not always easy for these demands to be met. Very likely this is the main reason why mothers, to a considerable degree, relinquish paid employment completely – at least temporarily – which has longer-term negative consequences for their social security entitlement and on their professional qualifications when re-entering the labour force. On the other hand, a satisfactory balance is also not necessarily found by both partners working full-time.

19. The indicators presented in this paper paint a picture of everyday family and work balance in several European countries. This is dependent on a variety of factors, not all of which can be influenced by a couple. Societal and institutional conditions – such as attitudes in relation to gender equality and division of roles, statutory parental leave, the provision of childcare, the school system, the structure of job offers on the labour market and the general socioeconomic situation of a country – limit, to a greater or lesser degree, the possibilities for combining professional and family life.

VI. ANNEX

Working patterns in couple households, 2005-2006

T1

Only persons aged 25 to 49 years

	Man & woman full-time	Man full-time / woman part-time	Man full-time / woman not working	Man part-time / woman full-time	Man & woman part-time	Man part-time / woman not working	Man not working / woman full-time	Man not working / woman part-time	Man & woman not working
Portugal	66.7	5.8	20.0	0.8	0.2	0.4	3.7	0.5	1.9
Finland	64.0	7.7	18.1	1.2	0.5	0.5	4.7	0.5	2.6
Romania	59.1	2.7	19.9	1.4	1.8	1.9	6.3	0.5	6.4
Hungary	54.7	2.7	28.8	0.5	0.1	0.4	5.4	0.3	7.1
Spain	43.6	14.1	33.6	0.8	0.4	0.5	2.9	0.9	3.0
Sweden	43.0	31.5	8.6	4.5	4.3	2.2	2.0	1.9	2.0
Ireland	42.1	20.4	28.9	0.9	0.4	0.8	1.7	0.8	3.9
Belgium	37.4	33.4	18.8	1.4	1.3	0.8	2.2	1.1	3.6
Italy	36.8	17.8	37.1	0.8	0.6	0.9	1.7	0.7	3.6
Austria	32.2	37.4	20.2	1.3	1.5	0.9	2.2	1.6	2.7
Germany	28.3	33.2	24.9	1.3	1.2	1.0	2.9	2.2	5.0
Switzerland	23.4	41.9	24.4	1.4	3.4	0.9	1.8	1.6	1.2

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

Working patterns in couple households by presence and age of children, 2005-2006

T2

Only persons aged 25 to 49 years

		Man & woman full-time	Man full-time / woman part-time	Man full-time / woman not working	Man part-time / woman full-time	Man & woman part-time	Man part-time / woman not working	Man not working / woman full-time	Man not working / woman part-time	Man & woman not working
Switzerland	Without children	54.0	24.6	9.0	3.3	3.2	0.8	3.2	1.3	0.7
	Child aged up to 6	8.1	45.1	36.9	0.4	4.0	1.3	1.1	1.5	1.5
	Child aged more than 6	12.6	55.1	23.3	0.7	2.6	0.6	1.6	2.2	1.3
Austria	Without children	57.4	18.5	10.6	2.4	1.8	1.1	4.3	1.8	2.2
	Child aged up to 6	19.3	37.6	32.2	0.7	1.7	1.3	1.5	1.5	4.1
	Child aged more than 6	29.9	45.1	16.5	1.2	1.3	0.5	1.8	1.7	2.0
Germany	Without children	58.0	15.6	10.7	2.3	1.4	0.8	5.2	1.8	4.2
	Child aged up to 6	12.6	30.5	42.5	0.9	1.2	1.7	1.8	1.7	7.1
	Child aged more than 6	22.4	44.4	21.3	1.0	1.0	0.7	2.5	2.6	4.0
Belgium	Without children	46.2	24.8	17.5	1.6	1.1	0.7	3.1	1.2	3.8
	Child aged up to 6	35.2	33.1	20.1	1.6	1.6	1.1	2.0	0.9	4.5
	Child aged more than 6	33.8	39.6	18.2	1.2	1.1	0.5	1.7	1.3	2.6
Portugal	Without children	72.6	4.9	14.9	1.5	0.0	0.3	3.9	0.5	1.3
	Child aged up to 6	68.9	4.6	20.8	0.6	0.2	0.5	2.9	0.3	1.4
	Child aged more than 6	63.7	6.9	20.7	0.8	0.2	0.3	4.2	0.6	2.5
Finland	Without children	68.2	6.5	10.4	2.6	0.6	0.6	7.1	0.6	3.2
	Child aged up to 6	52.7	9.1	29.6	0.8	0.4	0.8	3.3	0.4	2.9
	Child aged more than 6	76.3	6.9	9.2	0.6	0.6	0.0	4.6	0.6	1.2
Italy	Without children	58.7	13.2	20.5	1.0	0.6	0.7	2.1	0.7	2.4
	Child aged up to 6	30.6	19.9	41.7	0.6	0.7	1.0	1.3	0.6	3.6
	Child aged more than 6	33.1	17.9	40.1	0.8	0.5	1.0	1.9	0.7	4.0
Spain	Without children	63.2	9.8	17.7	1.3	0.4	0.4	4.1	0.7	2.3
	Child aged up to 6	38.1	15.5	38.4	0.8	0.4	0.6	2.4	0.9	2.9
	Child aged more than 6	39.8	14.8	36.4	0.6	0.4	0.4	2.9	1.1	3.6
Romania	Without children	69.1	1.2	16.2	1.0	1.4	1.0	5.2	0.5	4.4
	Child aged up to 6	58.5	3.1	20.0	1.5	1.7	2.4	5.8	0.5	6.4
	Child aged more than 6	57.0	2.8	20.7	1.5	2.0	1.7	6.9	0.6	6.9
Hungary	Without children	75.2	1.1	11.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	5.7	0.2	5.8
	Child aged up to 6	32.3	2.9	51.9	0.2	0.1	0.6	2.3	0.2	9.4
	Child aged more than 6	64.6	3.2	17.4	0.7	0.2	0.3	7.5	0.4	5.7
Sweden	Without children	50.0	17.0	8.8	7.2	5.0	3.3	5.1	1.7	2.1
	Child aged up to 6	35.6	37.9	9.9	3.7	4.9	2.2	1.2	2.3	2.2
	Child aged more than 6	49.7	29.6	6.7	4.2	3.2	1.7	1.7	1.5	1.7

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

Time spent in paid and unpaid work, 2000-2004¹**T3**

Hours per week, persons aged 15+

		Total		Parents with pre-school children	
		Women	Men	Women	Men
Belgium ²	Paid	15	23		
	Unpaid	30	17		
	Total	45	40		
Finland	Paid	17	26	17	39
	Unpaid	28	18	45	22
	Total	45	44	62	61
Germany ²	Paid	14	24		
	Unpaid	29	16		
	Total	43	39		
Hungary ²	Paid	16	24		
	Unpaid	32	17		
	Total	48	41		
Italy	Paid	10	21	17	41
	Unpaid	24	5	39	7
	Total	34	26	55	48
Spain	Paid	14	30	16	42
	Unpaid	36	13	50	18
	Total	51	44	66	61
Sweden ³	Paid	21	31	18	38
	Unpaid	29	21	42	27
	Total	50	52	60	65
Switzerland	Paid	15	30	11	41
	Unpaid	32	19	60	30
	Total	47	49	71	71

¹ Data refer to different years depending on country. They aren't collected yearly and do not change substantially in a time period of 5 years.

² Data refer to age group 20-74. Paid work: including time spent on study at school and during free time.

³ Data refer to age group 16-64.

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database

Part-time employed, 2005**T4**

As percent of employed women respectively men

	Women	Men
Switzerland	58.8	11.8
Germany	43.3	7.6
Belgium	40.5	7.6
Austria	39.3	6.1
Sweden	38.0	11.6
Italy	25.6	4.6
Spain	24.2	4.5
Portugal	16.2	7.0
Romania	10.5	10.0
Hungary	5.8	2.7

Source: UNECE Gender Statistics Database
