

HOURS WORKED

Lower hours worked is one of the forms in which the benefits of productivity growth have been shared by people. Hours worked is also one of the ways that labour markets adjust most intensively during business cycles. In recent years, governments of several OECD countries have also pursued policies to make it easier for parents to reconcile work and family life, and some of these policies have tended to reduce working time.

Definition

The average number of hours worked per year is calculated as the total numbers of hours actually worked over the year divided by the average number of people in employment. The data cover employees and self-employed workers; they include both full-time and part-time employment.

Employment is generally measured through household labour force surveys. In accordance with the ILO Guidelines, employed persons are defined as those aged 15 years or over who report that they have worked in gainful

Overview

In the large majority of OECD countries, average hours worked per employed person have fallen over the period from 2000 to 2011. However, this decline was rather small in most countries, as compared to the decline in earlier decades. Part of the observed decline in average hours worked between these two years reflect business cycle effects.

For the OECD as a whole, the average hours worked per employed person fell from 1 843 annual hours in 2000 to 1 775 in 2011; this is equivalent to a reduction of one and a half hours over a 40-hour work-week. Annual working hours fell in a majority of countries, increasing only in Belgium and Sweden, albeit only slightly. Reductions in annual hours worked over this period were most marked in Australia, Austria, Chile, the Czech Republic, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Japan and Luxembourg, where they declined by over 80 hours or more or 5% or more, with Chile and Korea showing the largest decrease of 216 and 319 hours respectively. A decline of more than 50% in hours worked since the onset of the crisis occurred in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Japan, Poland, Portugal, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Although one should exercise caution when comparing levels across countries, actual hours worked are significantly above the OECD average, by 200 or more hours, in Mexico, Korea, Chile, Greece and Hungary and significantly below the OECD average, by 200 or less hours, in the Netherlands, Germany, Norway, France, Denmark and Ireland.

employment for at least one hour in the previous week or were temporarily absent from work.

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

Comparability

Data are based on a range of sources of varying reliability. Annual working hours reported for 30 out of 34 countries are provided by national statistical offices and are estimated using the best available sources. These national data are intended for comparisons of trends in productivity and labour inputs and are not fully suitable for inter-country comparisons of the level of hours worked because of differences in their sources and other uncertainties about their international comparability.

There has been a major revision to the Mexican data on annual hours worked in 2012. This is the result of a change in the methodology by national data providers – the Mexican Secretariat of Labour and Social Welfare (STPS) and the Mexican Statistics Office (INEGI).

Sources

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Further information

Analytical publications

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- OECD (2004), “Recent Labour Market Developments and Prospects: Clocking In (and Out): Several Facets of Working Time”, *OECD Employment Outlook 2004*, OECD Publishing.

Online database

- *OECD Employment and Labour Market Statistics*.

Websites

- OECD Labour Statistics, www.oecd.org/statistics/labour.

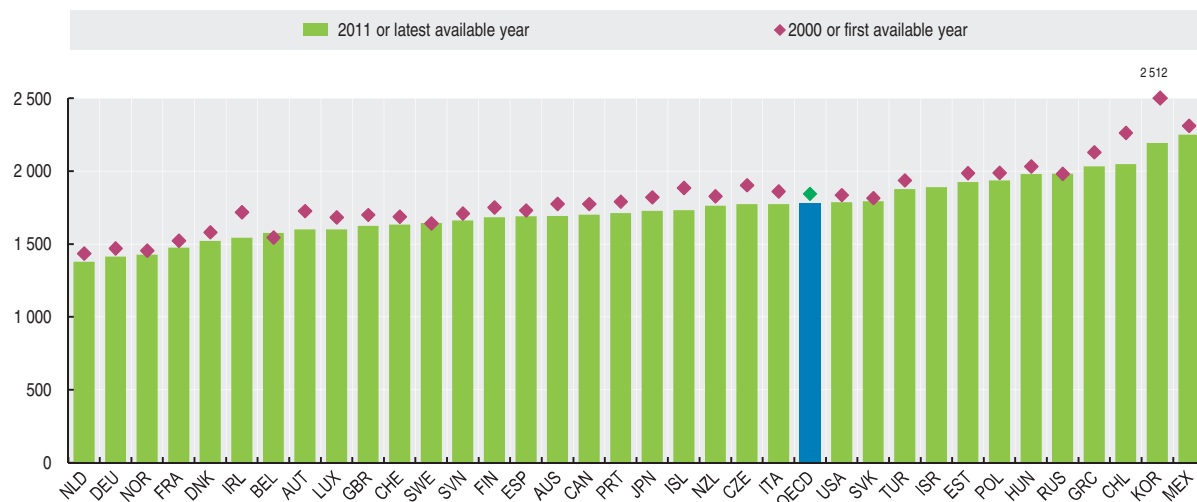

Average hours actually worked

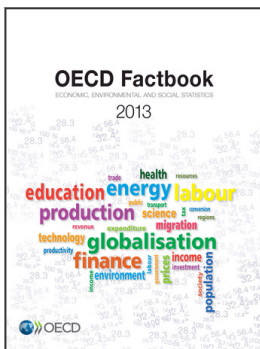
Hours per year per person in employment

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Australia	1 779	1 776	1 737	1 731	1 735	1 733	1 725	1 715	1 711	1 716	1 685	1 687	1 693
Austria	1 733	1 727	1 714	1 710	1 705	1 714	1 696	1 673	1 667	1 648	1 608	1 599	1 600
Belgium	1 581	1 545	1 577	1 580	1 575	1 549	1 565	1 566	1 560	1 568	1 550	1 551	1 577
Canada	1 778	1 775	1 768	1 747	1 736	1 754	1 739	1 738	1 738	1 728	1 700	1 702	1 702
Chile	2 277	2 263	2 242	2 250	2 235	2 232	2 157	2 165	2 128	2 095	2 074	2 068	2 047
Czech Republic	1 899	1 904	1 827	1 825	1 815	1 827	1 827	1 808	1 793	1 800	1 764	1 795	1 774
Denmark	1 569	1 581	1 587	1 579	1 577	1 579	1 579	1 586	1 570	1 570	1 559	1 560	1 522
Estonia	..	1 987	1 978	1 983	1 985	1 996	2 010	2 001	1 999	1 969	1 831	1 879	1 924
Finland	1 764	1 751	1 733	1 726	1 719	1 723	1 716	1 709	1 706	1 688	1 672	1 684	1 684
France	1 560	1 523	1 514	1 476	1 473	1 501	1 495	1 473	1 485	1 492	1 472	1 478	1 476
Germany	1 491	1 471	1 453	1 441	1 436	1 436	1 431	1 424	1 422	1 422	1 383	1 408	1 413
Greece	2 117	2 130	2 131	2 118	2 112	2 092	2 095	2 066	2 038	2 051	1 995	2 017	2 032
Hungary	2 042	2 033	1 997	2 009	1 981	1 992	1 992	1 988	1 983	1 988	1 969	1 962	1 980
Iceland	1 873	1 885	1 847	1 812	1 811	1 827	1 818	1 807	1 783	1 787	1 706	1 691	1 732
Ireland	1 725	1 719	1 713	1 698	1 671	1 668	1 654	1 645	1 634	1 601	1 541	1 545	1 543
Israel	..	..	..	..	..	1 905	1 989	1 887	1 921	1 898	1 889	1 888	1 890
Italy	1 876	1 861	1 843	1 831	1 826	1 826	1 819	1 815	1 816	1 803	1 771	1 775	1 774
Japan	1 810	1 821	1 809	1 798	1 799	1 787	1 775	1 784	1 785	1 771	1 714	1 733	1 728
Korea	2 495	2 512	2 499	2 464	2 424	2 392	2 351	2 346	2 306	2 246	2 232	2 193	..
Luxembourg	1 690	1 683	1 667	1 656	1 651	1 607	1 590	1 601	1 537	1 577	1 622	1 636	1 601
Mexico	2 306	2 311	2 285	2 271	2 277	2 271	2 281	2 281	2 262	2 260	2 253	2 242	2 250
Netherlands	1 437	1 435	1 424	1 408	1 401	1 399	1 393	1 392	1 388	1 392	1 384	1 381	1 379
New Zealand	1 837	1 828	1 817	1 817	1 813	1 828	1 811	1 788	1 766	1 750	1 738	1 758	1 762
Norway	1 473	1 455	1 429	1 414	1 399	1 417	1 420	1 414	1 419	1 423	1 407	1 414	1 426
Poland	..	1 988	1 974	1 979	1 984	1 983	1 994	1 985	1 976	1 969	1 948	1 939	1 937
Portugal	1 838	1 791	1 795	1 793	1 768	1 790	1 778	1 784	1 754	1 772	1 746	1 742	1 711
Slovak Republic	1 816	1 816	1 801	1 754	1 698	1 742	1 769	1 774	1 791	1 793	1 780	1 807	1 793
Slovenia	..	1 710	1 696	1 720	1 724	1 737	1 697	1 667	1 655	1 670	1 670	1 676	1 662
Spain	1 732	1 731	1 736	1 734	1 719	1 704	1 686	1 673	1 658	1 663	1 669	1 674	1 690
Sweden	1 665	1 642	1 618	1 595	1 582	1 605	1 605	1 599	1 618	1 617	1 602	1 643	1 644
Switzerland	1 694	1 688	1 650	1 630	1 643	1 673	1 654	1 643	1 633	1 623	1 617	1 632	..
Turkey	1 925	1 937	1 942	1 943	1 943	1 918	1 936	1 944	1 911	1 900	1 881	1 877	1 877
United Kingdom	1 716	1 700	1 705	1 684	1 674	1 674	1 673	1 669	1 677	1 659	1 651	1 652	1 625
United States	1 847	1 836	1 814	1 810	1 800	1 802	1 799	1 800	1 798	1 792	1 767	1 778	1 787
EU 27	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
OECD	1 850	1 844	1 829	1 819	1 812	1 812	1 807	1 805	1 799	1 792	1 766	1 775	1 776
Brazil	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
India	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Indonesia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Russian Federation	1 964	1 982	1 980	1 982	1 994	1 994	1 990	1 999	2 000	1 997	1 973	1 976	1 981
South Africa

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