

Title	Job quality in Europe
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Abstract	<p><b>1. Brief justification for the JQI and its component indicators</b></p> <p>The Lisbon Strategy, launched in 2000, called for creating 'more and better jobs' in Europe. The targets in terms of 'more jobs' are employment rates of 70%, 60% and 50% for total employment, women and elderly workers respectively by 2010. And indeed some progress has been achieved in bringing more Europeans into paid employment and in cutting unemployment rates.</p> <p>The goal of 'better jobs', on the other hand, has been less ardently pursued. In fact, there is a widespread perception that many of the new jobs being created are 'bad jobs'. Increasingly workers are being asked, or forced, to work longer and/or more 'unsocial' hours, and to accept non-standard employment contracts. Partly this reflects structural shifts in the economy, but employers are widely seen as being more short-term in orientation, cutting back on investing in training the workforce, offering limited career trajectories and employee benefits, and being less open to engaging with collective forms of worker interest representation.</p> <p>Against this background our job quality index (JQI) is an attempt to shed some light on the question whether the goal of 'more jobs' has been pursued at the cost of 'better jobs' and how European countries compare with each other in regard to job quality.</p> <p>Since job quality is a multifaceted phenomenon the JQI is a composite of different fields or sub-indices that capture various dimensions of job quality. The choice of these fields, the underlying indicators, the data sources and the methodologies used to arrive at a single index for each country year and gender have been described in detail in an earlier publication (Leschke/Watt/Finn 2008), which is available on-line and to which the interested reader is referred.<sup>1</sup> The focus here is on presenting and interpreting the results. We start with a summary introduction to the JQI here, and provide a brief description of the indicators as a preface to the discussion of the results for each sub-index (sections 2.1-2.7). In section 3 we shift the focus and discuss the findings in terms of country profiles and country clusters.</p> <p>The JQI consists of six sub-indices, namely wages, non-standard forms of employment, work-life balance and working time, working conditions and job security, access to training and career advancement, and collective interest representation and voice/participation. All six sub-indices are made up of at least two weighted indicators, some of which are themselves composites. The data are taken from various data sources and are inverted where necessary to fit the logic of a higher number indicating better job quality. Each indicator is normalised on a range between zero and one, where zero is the worst and one the best-performing country. By using the results for 'total' for the normalisation of the gendered data, gender comparisons are possible. The overall JQI is an unweighted average of the six sub-indices.</p>

The JQI covers the EU27 countries and the indicators were selected in such a way that it allows gender comparisons and comparisons over time going forward. Our interest in having a quantitative indicator that can be regularly updated and is comparable over time necessitated some compromises in terms of thematic coverage and depth. Particularly in the case of collective interest representation this makes cautious interpretation of the results necessary. Due to data restrictions backward-looking comparisons over time are only possible for the EU15 countries. The results of this comparison, which uses slightly different indicators in some sub-indices, are not reported here. The interested reader is referred to ELNEP 2008 and HBS 2008.

The results that are presented below are based on the most recent data available in early 2008 – mostly 2006 data. EU15 and EU27 averages as displayed in the following figures are weighted by population size. It is important to note that the JQI deliberately focuses on the quality of the employment relationship itself and not on the wider welfare state (the generosity of benefits, for instance) or overall labour market performance (measures of productivity or unemployment). Clearly such factors contribute to what one might term the ‘quality of life for working people’. However once one begins to incorporate such factors, it becomes even more difficult to delineate the field of interest; already we have had to use broader indicators (such as collective bargaining coverage) because we cannot easily measure the voice/participation dimension of job quality. An extension towards a broader ‘workers’ welfare index’ is a possible area for further work.