

# Introduction to the WICARE data collection

Report 1 of the [WICARE](#) project, February 2015

## 1.1. Employment in the social services

In the second quarter of 2014 throughout the 28 member states of the European Union the social services sector employed 4,855,000 people in Residential care activities and 5,107,000 in Social work activities without accommodation, according to Eurostat.<sup>1</sup> Table 1 shows which sectors exactly are included.

**Table 1** *The social services and its sub-sectors*

Social services	NACE 2.0 codes
Residential nursing care activities	8710
Residential care activities for mental retardation, mental health and substance abuse	8720
Residential care activities for the elderly and disabled	8730
Social work activities without accommodation for the elderly and disabled	8810
Child day-care activities	8891
Social work activities without accommodation	8899

Especially in Residential care activities, employment in EU28 has been growing fast with just over one million workers (26%) between 2008 and 2014. With over 620,000 (14% higher) in the past seven years, employment growth has been somewhat smaller but still considerable in Social work activities without accommodation. In both sectors growth has concentrated between 2008 and 2011 and in 2013-14. Between 2013-Q2 and 2014-Q2, employment in the EU28 in the two sectors jointly grew by 410,000, or 4 percent. With in 2014 81 percent female workers in Residential care activities and 83 percent females in Social work activities without accommodation, both sectors are dominated by female workers. This gender composition did not change between 2008 and 2014. In contrast, the workforce in both sectors aged somewhat. Whereas in 2008 in both sectors 57 percent was 40-64 years of age, by 2014 this had become 59 and 60 percent respectively. At the same time, the share of young workers (15-24-aged), in 2008

<sup>1</sup> *lfsq\_egan22d*, accessed 09-11-2014. Residential care activities is NACE\_rev2 87, and Social work activities without accommodation is NACE\_rev2 88.

in both sectors 9.3 percent, decreased in 2014 to 9.1 percent in Residential care activities and 7.7 percent in Social work activities without accommodation. For 2014, the average age of the workforce in both sectors can be estimated at 43.

## **1.2. EPSU and the need to understand developments in the social services**

Hence, in the European Union the two related sectors reveal a rather fast employment growth and currently cover nearly 10 million workers, or 4.7 percent of all employed in the EU28. These developments challenge trade unions organizing workers in the social services throughout the European Union, united in the European Federation of Public Services Unions ([EPSU](#)). EPSU is the largest federation of the European Trade Union Confederation ([ETUC](#)), comprising of 8 million public service workers from over 250 trade unions. EPSU organises workers in the utilities, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood.

EPSU and its affiliates expressed a need to understand recent labour market developments in the social services. It has to be noted that EPSU has been working to improve the level of information it provides to its affiliates on collective bargaining and social dialogue across the sectors in which it organizes. EPSU aims to increase insights in the wages and working conditions in the social services across the countries in the European Union. Core of the WICARE project was data collection about work and wages through a web survey, posted on the websites of partner WageIndicator Foundation.

## **1.3. The WICARE project**

To meet the above mentioned information needs, the EPSU, the University of Amsterdam/ [AIAS](#), the independent research institute [CELSI](#) in Bratislava, and the WageIndicator Foundation joined forces. They submitted a project proposal for funding through the EU Industrial Relations and Social Dialogue Program. In Autumn 2013 this so-called [WICARE](#) project has been financially supported by the European Commission (nr VS/2013/0404). Sole responsibility for the project lies with the project partners.

WICARE is coordinated by the University of Amsterdam/ [AIAS](#), specifically Maarten van Klaveren and Kea Tijdens. WICARE's main partner is the EPSU in Brussels, specifically Richard Pond and Mathias Maucher. Other partners are the research institute CELSI in Bratislava (Brian Fabo and colleagues), and the [WageIndicator](#) Foundation (Paulien Osse).

The WICARE project ran from 1 December 2013 until 31 November 2014. On 18 November 2014 the draft project results were presented at a conference in Amsterdam with almost 30 participants from trade unions in Belgium, Germany, Hungary, Estonia, Czech Republic and Slovakia, as well as from project partners. The reports have been adapted accordingly.

Note that on request of EPSU six countries from outside the European Union were included in the data analysis, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine. The reason was that partner WageIndicator in all these countries already had a website and a web survey and that WageIndicator offered to undertake extra promotion in these countries at its own budget. For the analyses of the survey data, the budget does not relate to the number of countries included but to the number of topics. Hence, for the extension to six more countries no EU funding has been used.

#### **1.4. The *WageIndicator* survey on wages and working conditions**

Core of the WICARE project are the analyses of the data from the continuous [WageIndicator](#) web-survey on work and wages. Visitors of the national WageIndicator websites are invited to complete the survey. WICARE addressed all 28 EU countries plus six CIS countries, in total 34 countries. Core of the WICARE project are the analyses of the data of the continuous *WageIndicator* web-survey on work and wages. This web-survey is posted on the national websites of the WageIndicator Foundation. On these websites a teaser has been posted, inviting individuals working in the social services to complete the survey. For all countries in the project, a printed version was generated from the web surveys. EPSU affiliates were asked to distribute the survey among their membership and their co-workers. From the very start of the project, EPSU and affiliates undertook considerable efforts to invite workers to complete the survey.

The data source used in this report stems from the *WageIndicator* web-survey on work and wages. The data from this survey is most suitable for the collection of data concerning wages and working conditions in the social services in the European Union and beyond. Through its web survey *WageIndicator* is building a growing, multi-country dataset with information on wages, benefits, and other working conditions, such as working times, contracts, jobs and job levels, training, and collective bargaining coverage. The web survey is posted continuously at the national *WageIndicator* websites ([www.wageindicator.org](http://www.wageindicator.org)).<sup>2</sup> The websites consist of job-related content, labour law and minimum wage information, and a free Salary Check, and have received millions of visitors. In return for the free information provided, web visitors are invited to voluntarily complete a questionnaire with a lottery prize incentive. Between one and five per cent of the visitors do so. Each survey is in the national language(s) and the answers to a number of questions, such as education, are adapted to the country.

Being a volunteer web survey, the data is not representative of the national labour forces. In most countries the survey data deviate to some extent from representative surveys with regard to age, gender and education.<sup>3</sup> In almost all countries the labour force aged 40 years and over is slightly underrepresented, for women more so than for men. Given the budget constraints for the Social Dialogue projects and given EPSU's desire to have detailed cross-country comparative survey data for the social services, the data from the *WageIndicator* web survey seemed sufficiently detailed, and the bias is considered not too large; therefore, the research results will be considered explorative rather than representative for the social services. One should also note that the *WageIndicator* web-survey has a substantial drop-out rate during survey completion, which is common for all web-surveys.

At the start of the WICARE project, 30 of the 34 countries in the project had a *WageIndicator* web-survey. In four countries new websites have been started, namely in Croatia, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. In addition to the web survey,

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<sup>2</sup> For more information about the *WageIndicator* web-survey, see the codebook at [www.wageindicator.org/main/publications/2010](http://www.wageindicator.org/main/publications/2010).

<sup>3</sup> Steinmetz, S., Raess D, Tijdens, K.G., De Pedraza P (2013) *Measuring wages worldwide – exploring the potentials and constraints of volunteer web surveys*. In Sappleton N: *Advancing Research Methods with New Media Technologies*, p 100-119, IGI Global, Hershey PA

EPSU affiliates were asked to distribute a printed version of the survey. This version was particularly successful in Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Lithuania, the Russian Federation, and Slovakia.

Core of the WICARE project are the analyses on the data from the continuous [WageIndicator](#) web-survey on work and wages. Visitors of the national WageIndicator websites are invited to complete this survey. For the analysis, the survey data is used from workers in the residential care activities and the social work activities without accommodation, collected between 1/1/2013 and 31/9/2014<sup>4</sup> from the web survey and a printed version of the survey, which was distributed by national affiliates of EPSU.

Data was collected in 34 countries. In a number of countries, the response was very low. In this report no information is provided for countries with less than 10 completed questionnaires. This is the case for twelve of the 34 countries, namely Armenia, Croatia, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, and Sweden. In two of these countries no worker completed the survey, in the other countries the response was between one and five workers. The remaining 22 countries are included in the analyses, of which 10 countries from the EU15, namely Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, UK. Seven countries from the newly accessed countries are included, namely Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia. Five countries from the Russian Federation and former Soviet countries are included, namely Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine. Across countries the number of observations (the 'N' in the graphs and tables in this report) ranges from 20 in Bulgaria to 2,911 in the Netherlands (Table 2). In these countries, 9,143 workers started the questionnaire. Valid *wage* data of 4413 respondents could be used.

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<sup>4</sup> Belgium, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Ukraine until 31/1/2015

**Table 2** *Number of observations in the web-survey in 34 countries*

	No of observations	Col %	Obs. with valid wage data	Col %	Type
Austria	45	.5	25	.6	EU15
Belgium	840	9.2	357	8.1	EU15
Denmark	Not sufficient data				EU15
Finland	Not sufficient data				EU15
France	32	.3	2	.0	EU15
Germany	1481	16.2	1009	22.9	EU15
Greece	Not sufficient data				EU15
Ireland	Not sufficient data				EU15
Italy	38	.4	12	.3	EU15
Luxembourg	28	.3	7	.2	EU15
Netherlands	2911	31.8	1015	23.0	EU15
Portugal	95	1.0	28	.6	EU15
Spain	118	1.3	47	1.1	EU15
Sweden	Not sufficient data				EU15
UK	115	1.3	60	1.4	EU15
Bulgaria	20	.2	16	.4	NAC
Croatia	Not sufficient data				NAC
Cyprus	Not sufficient data				NAC
Czech Republic	268	2.9	138	3.1	NAC
Estonia	183	2.0	120	2.7	NAC
Hungary	1129	12.3	708	16.0	NAC
Latvia	Not sufficient data				NAC
Lithuania	127	1.4	89	2.0	NAC
Malta	Not sufficient data				NAC
Poland	Not sufficient data				NAC
Romania	Not sufficient data				NAC
Slovakia	287	3.1	141	3.2	NAC
Slovenia	25	.3	15	.3	NAC
Armenia	Not sufficient data				CIS
Azerbaijan	40	.4	11	.2	CIS
Belarus	272	3.0	96	2.2	CIS
Kazakhstan	284	3.1	126	2.9	CIS
Russian Federation	192	2.1	93	2.1	CIS
Ukraine	595	6.5	285	6.5	CIS
Total	9143	100.0	4413	100.0	

Source: WageIndicator data 01-Jan-2013 - 30-Sep-2014. Selection workers in social services in 34 countries.

The findings reflect what workers think about their pay and conditions. This may not correspond to what trade unions perceive to be the case based on the agreements that they have negotiated. Differences may evolve because employees are unaware of the provisions of collective agreements or because collective agreements may not be implemented properly at local level. In addition, it is also important to take into account that existing legislation and regulations in place, for example on health and safety, might not be (fully) complied to “in real life”. A final comment concerning the data relates to the fact that the survey is completed on a voluntary basis. This implies that the data are

not representative to the total workforce in the social services, because that assumes a randomly sampled survey. Hence, the interpretation of the findings should be done with caution.

## 1.5. The WICARE reports

Based on the survey, nine topical reports have been written, including this one:

1. *Introduction to the WICARE data collection*
2. *Employment characteristics, including labour contract and years of service*
3. *Occupational structures and skills, training, career prospects, job-education (mis)matches*
4. *Remuneration, hourly wages, overtime compensation and performance-pay*
5. *Workers' representation, bargaining coverage, union density and shop-floor representation*
6. *Working hours, length of working week, overtime and irregular hours*
7. *Working conditions, work-related stress and reorganisations at the workplace*
8. *Job satisfaction and satisfaction with pay and working hours*
9. *Socio-demographic characteristics of workers in the social services*

Note that the initially intended report 'Participation in benefit and pension schemes' could not be written, because the survey could not grasp the country differences concerning benefits and pension schemes.

In addition, eight country reports have been written, namely about:

1. *Belgium*
2. *Germany*
3. *Netherlands*
4. *Czech Republic*
5. *Estonia*
6. *Hungary*
7. *Slovakia*
8. *Ukraine*

All reports are free downloadable from the [WICARE](#) project website.

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## Appendix The partners in the WICARE project

**EPSU:** The European Federation of Public Services Unions (EPSU) in Brussels, is the largest federation of the ETUC and comprises 8 million public service workers from over 250 trade unions; EPSU organises workers in the utilities, health and social services and local and national administration, in all European countries including in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood. EPSU is the recognized regional organization of Public Services International (PSI).

**AIAS:** The Amsterdam Institute for Advanced labour Studies (AIAS) is an institute for multidisciplinary research and teaching at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. Founded in 1998, it brings together the University's expertise in labour studies from the Faculties of Law, Social and Behavioural Sciences, Economics and Business, and Medicine. AIAS seeks to foster not only the results of their combined effect, but also to add value to the individual disciplines. Multidisciplinarity is strengthened by AIAS fellows.

**CELSI:** The Central European Labour Studies Institute (CELSI) in Bratislava, Slovakia, is a non-profit research institute. It fosters multidisciplinary research about the functioning of labour markets and institutions, work and organizations, business and society, and ethnicity and migration in the economic, social, and political life of modern societies. In the WICARE project, CELSI has been responsible for the data collection.

**WageIndicator Foundation:** The WageIndicator Foundation is an associate partner in WICARE. The Foundation has allowed the WICARE partners to use its survey management system, to post teasers on the relevant national *WageIndicator* websites to recruit respondents for the web survey, and to use the *WageIndicator* survey data for the aim of the project.

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