

# Working conditions, work-related stress and reorganisations at the workplace

*Report 7 of the WICARE project, February 2015.*

How are working conditions in the social services? Based on the 2013-2014 data of the WageIndicator survey on work and wages, WICARE aims to explore this topic. The web-survey contains a question about working conditions, focusing on work-related stress and asking how often respondents find their job stressful, how often they find their job boring, how often they find their job mentally exhausting, and how often they find their job physically exhausting. The answers range from 'never' (=1) to 'daily' (=5) on a 5-point scale. This question was not asked in all countries. Figure 1 presents the average score on the four working conditions indicators.

The score on 'finds job stressful' is highest in Slovakia (4.3), followed by Austria, Lithuania, and the Russian Federation (all around 4.2), whereas it is lowest in the Netherlands (3.6) and Germany (3.7). In almost all countries, around one in ten workers never or hardly ever find their job stressful. Yet, also in almost all countries around three to five of ten workers find their job daily stressful.

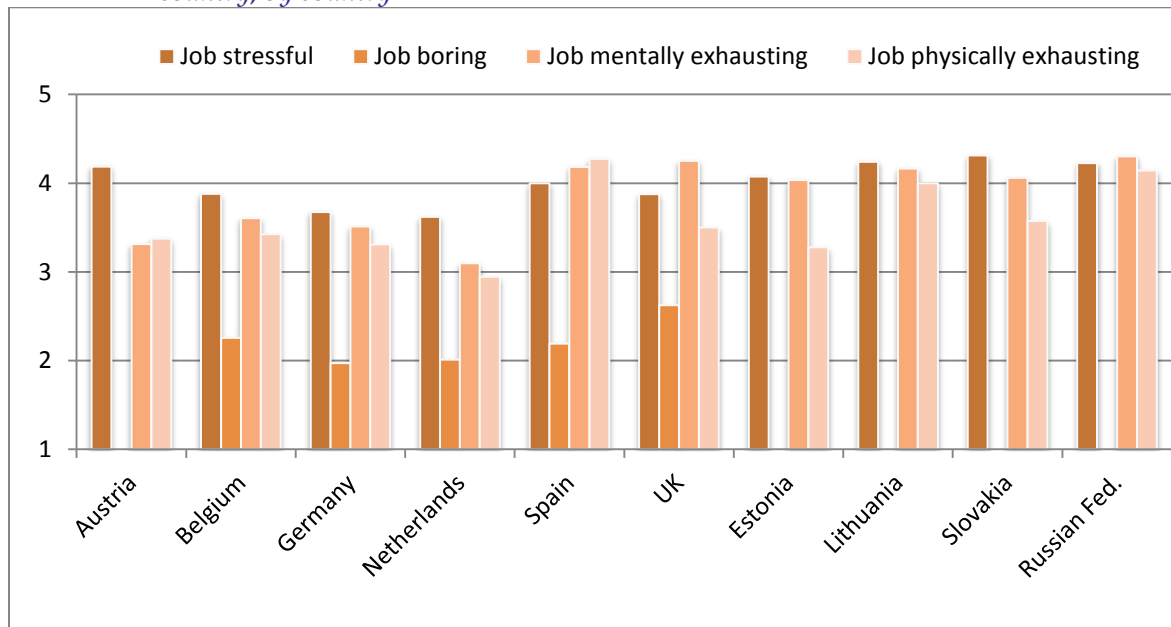
BOX: This report is part of the [WICARE](#) project, funded through the EU Industrial Relations and Social Dialogue Program of the European Commission (nr VS/2013/0404, DEC 2013 - NOV 2014). WICARE is coordinated by the University of Amsterdam/AIAS. Its main partner is the European Federation of Public Services Unions ([EPSU](#), Richard Pond and Mathias Maucher) in Brussels, the largest federation of the [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. Other partners are the research institute [CELSI](#) in Bratislava (Brian Fabo and colleagues), and the [WageIndicator](#) Foundation (Paulien Osse). Authors: Kea Tijdens and Maarten van Klaveren, University of Amsterdam / Amsterdam Institute for Advanced labour Studies ([AIAS](#)). Sole responsibility for the project lies with the authors. More information about the [project](#). 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. Survey data is used from workers in the residential care activities and the social work activities without accommodation, collected between 1/1/2013 and 30/9/ 2014 from the web survey and a printed version of the survey, which was distributed by the national affiliates of EPSU. For Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, and Ukraine data-collection was prolonged until 31/01/2015. In total 9,143 workers started the questionnaire, of which 4,223 gave valid details about their wages. Per country the number of observations ranges from 20 in Bulgaria to 2,911 in the Netherlands. On 18/11/2014 the draft project results are presented at a conference in Amsterdam. The current report is the version of 28/02/2015.

The scores on ‘finds job boring’ are only measured in five countries. The results show that it is highest in the UK (2.6) and lowest in Germany (2.0). In these countries, three to four in ten workers never or hardly ever find their job boring. At the other end of the spectrum, less than one in twenty finds their job daily so.

The scores on ‘finds job mentally exhausting’ are measured in ten countries. The results show that scores are highest in Spain, the UK and the Russian Federation (all around 4.2), whereas the score is lowest in the Netherlands (3.1). In the ten countries, around two in ten workers never or hardly ever find their job mentally exhausting, whereas two to five in ten finds their job daily so. In the Russian Federation this figure is even six in ten.

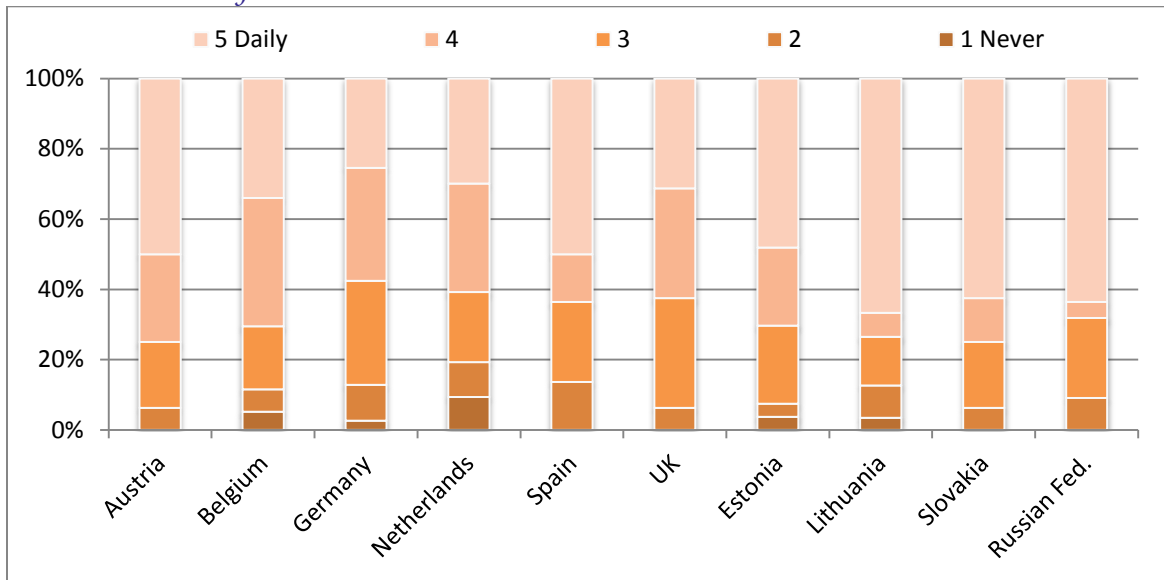
The scores on ‘finds job physically exhausting’ are measured in ten countries. The results show that it is highest in Spain (4.3), whereas it is lowest in the Netherlands (3.0). In these ten countries, around two in ten workers never or hardly ever find their job physically exhausting, with the exception of Spain where much less workers feel so. At the other end of the spectrum, in the Russian Federation six in ten workers find their job physically exhausting, followed by Spain with five in ten workers.

**Figure 1** Average score on four indicators of working conditions (1=never, 5= daily), by country, by country



Source: WageIndicator data 01-Jan-2013 - 30-Sep-2014 (AZE, BEL, BLR, KAZ, RUS, UKR: 31-Jan-2015). Selection workers in social services in 22 countries. N = 1236 for job stressful, N= 1000 for job boring, N = 1231 for job mentally and job physically exhausting. Cells with less than 10 observations are not shown.

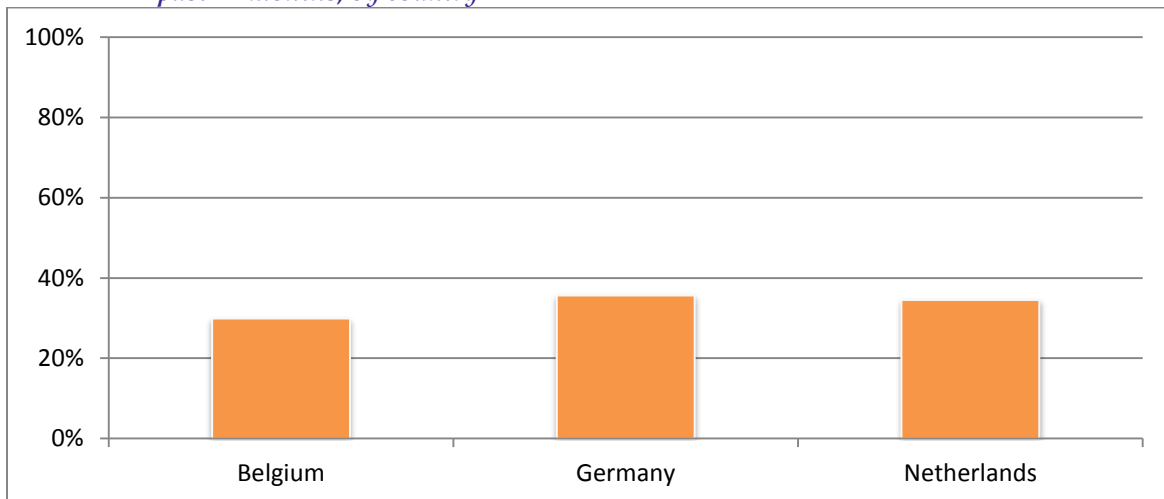
**Figure 2** *Distribution over five categories how often is job stressful (1=never, ..., 5= daily), by country*



Source: WageIndicator data 01-Jan-2013 - 30-Sep-2014 (AZE, BEL BLR, KAZ, RUS, UKR: 31-Jan-2015). Selection workers in social services in 22 countries. N = 1236.

In only three countries, in the survey a question was asked whether the workers had experienced reorganisations in the workplace in the past year. Figure 3 shows the results. The percentages of workers reporting so are very similar: slightly more than three in ten workers reports a reorganization.

**Figure 3** *Percentages of workers reporting that reorganisations affected the workplace in the past 12 months, by country*



Source: WageIndicator data 01-Jan-2013 - 30-Sep-2014 (AZE, BEL BLR, KAZ, RUS, UKR: 31-Jan-2015). Selection workers in social services in 22 countries. N = 774.

Concerning working conditions in the social services, in particular work-related stress, we can conclude to rather diverse outcomes on the questions asked. In almost all countries around three to five of ten workers find their job daily stressful. Here, the score was highest in Slovakia, followed by Austria, Lithuania, and the Russian Federation. By contrast only one in twenty respondents finds their job daily boring, with the highest score in the UK. The scores on 'finds job mentally exhausting' vary widely, and are highest in Spain, the UK and the Russian Federation. We find similar outcomes on 'finds job physically exhausting', with again the highest scores in Spain and the Russian Federation. Overall, in the ten countries where scores on 'finds job mentally exhausting' and 'finds job physically exhausting' are measured, two to five in ten workers finds their job daily so.

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