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PART-TIME WORK IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

When asked whether they are working part-time, 16% of all employed persons in the European Union answer yes. Part-time work varies considerably across Member states: from less than 10% in Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain and Portugal to over 20% in Denmark, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands. For 18% of the part-timers aged 25 and over, a part-time job is not the kind of work they preferred but they could not find full-time work. In Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands and Finland, part-time work is relatively more frequent among young people: 40% to 57% of those aged 15 to 24 have a part-time job. Part-time work is also more frequent among women and in economic activities, such as distribution, education, health, social and personal services, etc.

In Belgium, Spain and Italy, educational attainment is similar for part-timers and full-timers. In the other Member states, relatively more part-timers than full-timers have not completed upper secondary education. These less qualified part-timers are mainly under 25 in Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden and 25 years and over in most other Member states.

Part-timers in the EU are usually working less than 31 hours a week but 10% are working more. In Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, about 25% of the part-time jobs are jobs of less than 11 hours. In these Member states and also in Sweden, France and Portugal, 10% of the part-timers have a second job.

These are the results from an analysis of the 1996 data from the Community labour force survey - for Germany, the data refer to 1995.

Part-time work varies from 5% in Greece to 38% in the Netherlands

Part-time work is often seen as a policy measure to increase the number of employed persons by promoting work-sharing. It can be also an efficient tool for firms to respond to peaks in demand for goods or services in a particular period or to extend the opening hours. Finally, part-time work meets the specific conditions of labour supply for people who like to combine it with an education or their family care.

When asked whether they are working part-time, 16% of all employed persons in the EU answer yes.

Part-time work in Greece, Italy, Luxembourg, Spain and Portugal is less than 10%. In Denmark, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, part-time work is more common. In these Member states, almost one quarter of employed persons are working part-time, in the Netherlands it is even more than one third. The proportion of part-time work does not vary much by age except in Denmark, Finland, the Netherlands and Sweden. In these Member states, 40% to 57% of those aged 15 to 24 have a part-time job. Of the employed persons of 65 years and over in several Member states, 40% and more are also working part-time but the share of these older employed persons in total employment is only 1% or 2% (figure 1).

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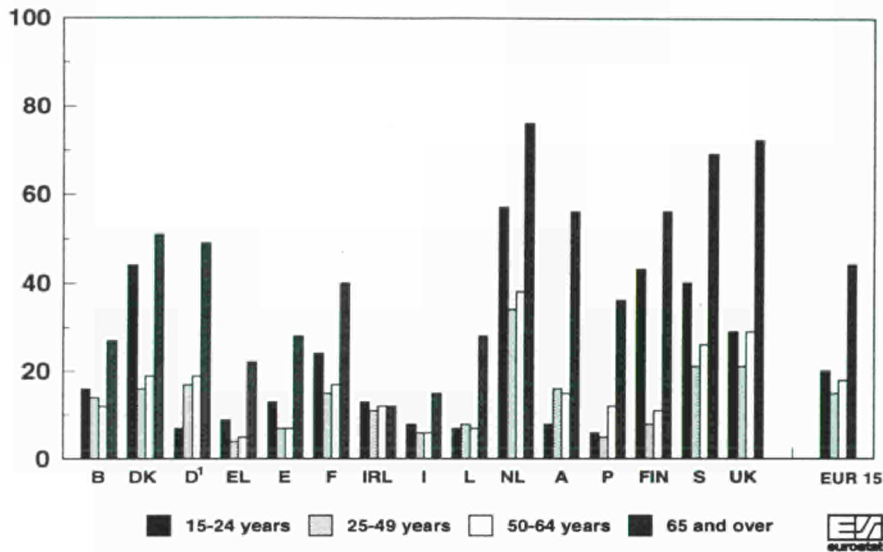
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Part-time work is more prevalent among women than among men. Female part-time employment in the EU is 32% in contrast to male part-time employment, being only 5%. In Belgium, Germany and

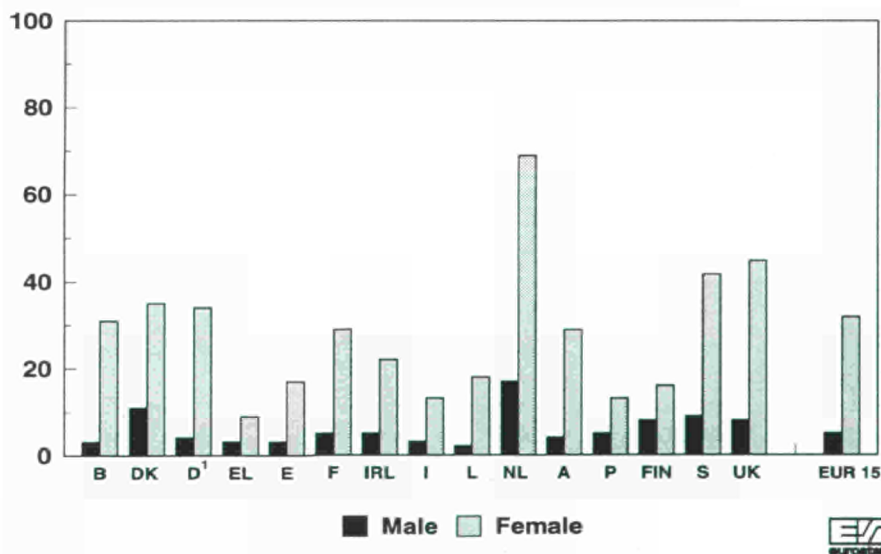
Luxembourg, the female part-time employment is about 10 times the male part-time employment. The gender imbalance is smaller in the other Member states (figure 2).

Figure 1:
Part-time work as % of total employment by age, 1996



¹ Data for Germany refer to 1995

Figure 2:
Part-time work as % of total employment by sex, 1996



¹ Data for Germany refer to 1995

18% of the part-timers aged 25 and over could not find full-time work

In the EU, for 18% of the part-timers aged 25 and over, a part-time job is not the kind of work they preferred but they could not find full-time work (table 1). Part-time work in Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom is less often involuntary than the European average. Furthermore, 64% of the part-timers aged 25 and over in Germany and over 80% in the Netherlands and the United Kingdom did not want a full-time job. In the other Member states except Denmark, part-time workers aged 25 and over say above European average that they could not find a full-time job.

Young part-timers under 25 years consider part-time work relatively more involuntary. The distinction in the proportion of involuntary part-time work between the Member states, which is obvious for part-timers aged 25 and over, remains. The most important reason for part-time work among young people under 25 years in most Member states is being in education or training.

The results for some Member states need to be interpreted with reserve due to the many other unspecified reasons.

Relatively more part-time work in the distribution and in the “other services”

Part-time work is relatively more frequent in the service sector: distribution, hotels and restaurants, business services and the “other services” (table 2). Among these economic activities, distribution and the “other services” (education, health and social work, social and personal services and private households) are the most significant because they comprise more than one third of total employment. Part-time work is particularly widespread in the “other services”: more than half of the employed persons in the “other services” in the Netherlands are working part-time, nearly one half in Sweden and the United Kingdom and about one third in Denmark. Only in, e.g., Greece and Italy are less than 10% of the employed persons working part-time in the “other services”.

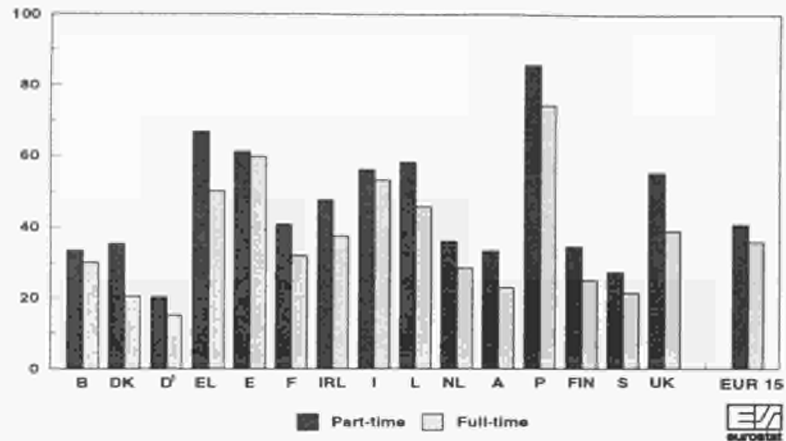
Relatively more part-timers have not completed upper secondary education

The working conditions and job tasks in part-time employment may be different from full-time employment. The employers may set lower educational requirements for part-time jobs or the better educated job seekers may prefer full-time jobs. The overall difference in educational attainment in the EU between part-timers and full-timers is small: 36% of the full-timers have not completed upper secondary education in comparison with 41% of the part-timers. These differences are minor in Belgium, Spain and Italy. But in the other Member states, relatively more part-timers than full-timers have not completed upper secondary education (figure 3).

One reason may be young people who are still in education. In Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden, the part-timers who have not completed upper secondary education are mainly young people under 25. In the other Member states (Germany, Greece, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Austria, Portugal), they are mainly 25 years and over. In the United Kingdom, the fact that relatively more part-timers have not completed upper secondary education is independent of age (figure 3a and 3b).

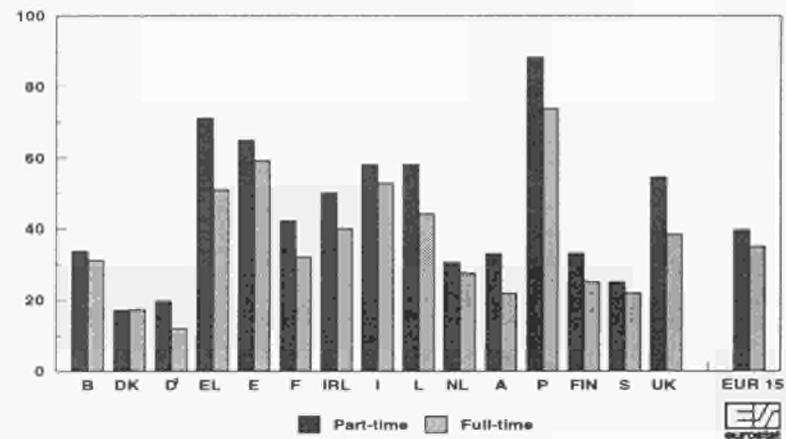
Another overall difference is whether third level education is completed. In the EU, 18% of the part-timers have completed third level education in comparison with 22% full-timers. These differences are minor in Belgium, Spain, Italy, Austria and the Netherlands. The proportion of part-timers and full-timers with a third level education is similar in two more Member States compared with the similarity at the level of secondary education in only three Member states. In the other Member states, relatively less part-timers than full-timers have completed third level education (17-18% of the part-timers in Germany and the United Kingdom compared with about 25-26% of the full-timers, 20% of the part-timers in Ireland, Denmark and Sweden compared with 30% of the full-timers). In Ireland, the United Kingdom and Sweden, relatively less part-timers have not completed third level education, independent of age. In Germany for example, it is mainly a characteristic of those aged 25 and over.

Figure 3:
Educational attainment: less than upper secondary education (%) of part-timers and full-timers, 1996



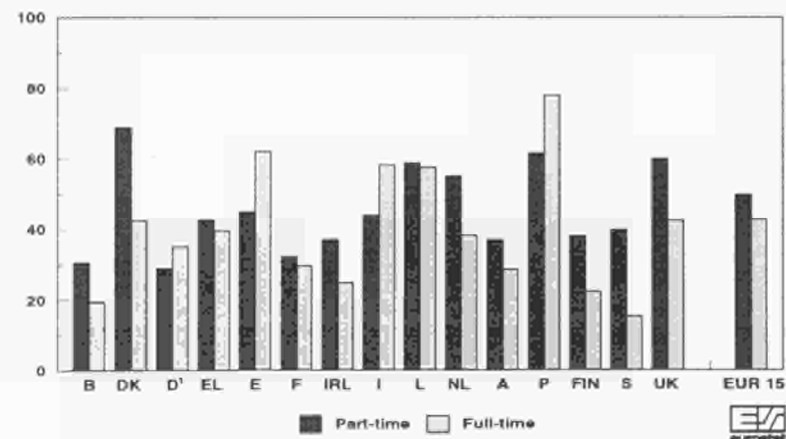
¹ Data for Germany refer to 1995

Figure 3a:
Educational attainment (%) of part-timers and full-timers, aged 25 and over, 1996



¹ Data for Germany refer to 1995

Figure 3b:
Educational attainment (%) of part-timers and full-timers, 15 - 24 years, 1996



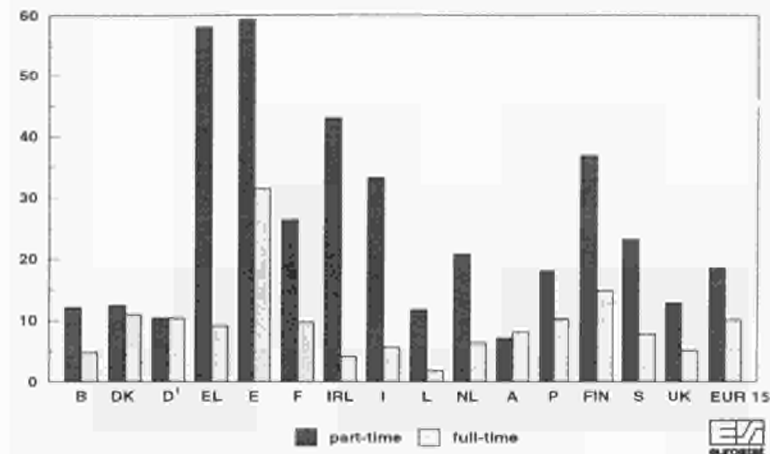
¹ Data for Germany refer to 1995

Relatively more part-time employees have a temporary contract

Another illustration of the specific labour conditions of part-timers is the type of their labour contract, permanent employment or of a limited duration.

19% of the employees with a part-time job in the EU have a contract of a limited duration in contrast to 10% of the full-time employees. In all other Member states except Germany and Austria, relatively more part-time employees have a contract of a limited duration than full-time employees.

Figure 4:
Temporary contract (%) of part-time and full-time employees, 1996



¹ Data for Germany refer to 1995

Part-time work on Saturday or Sunday depends on Member state

Part-time work is more likely to involve work on Saturday and Sunday than full-time work. In the EU, the proportions of persons working on Saturday or on Sunday are not much different between part-timers and full-timers (25% of part-timers are usually working on Saturday compared with 29% full-timers, 12% of part-timers are usually working on Sunday compared with 11% full-timers). The differences are larger within the Member states (table 3). In Denmark, Finland and Sweden, relatively more part-timers are working on Saturday than full-timers. On the other hand, in Spain, Greece, Ireland and Italy, relatively more full-timers are working on Saturday. Regarding work on Sunday, only in Denmark and Sweden, relatively more part-timers are working on Sunday than full-timers.

10% of the part-timers are usually working more than 30 hours a week

Part-time and full-time work do not correspond with a fixed number of hours usually worked. Part-time

work as well as full-time work covers a variety of number of hours worked. Most full-timers in the EU have a job of 36 hours a week or more. Part-timers in the EU are usually working less than 31 hours a week but 7% are working between 31 and 35 hours and 2% are working 36 hours a week or more (table 4). In Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, where part-time employment is high, many part-time jobs (between 25% and 28%) are jobs of less than 11 hours but, in the Netherlands, many part-timers are working more than 30 hours, too. In Sweden where part-time work is also relatively high, few part-timers are working less than 11 hours, instead, 43% of the part-timers are usually working between 21 and 30 hours. The picture is the same when it is limited to part-timers aged 25 and over, except in Denmark. In Denmark, similar to Sweden, many part-timers aged 25 and over are working between 21 and 30 hours.

Young part-timers, particularly in Denmark (59%) and the Netherlands (55%) have jobs of less than 11 hours. In Germany, Sweden and the United Kingdom, too, many young part-timers (more than 40%) have jobs of less than 11 hours but not to the same extent as in Denmark and the Netherlands.

Table 1:
Reasons for part-time work (%) of people aged 25 and over and of people younger than 25, 1996

	B	DK	D'	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EUR15
People aged 25 and over																
Education or training	1	9	6	1	1	-	1	2	1	1	5	3	8	3	2	3
Could not find full-time job	24	18	9	37	21	37	28	34	6	6	9	21	46	28	12	18
Did not want full-time job	12	69	64	39	4	63	25	28	61	88	16	11	30	57	84	63
Other reasons, no reason given	64	4	21	23	74	-	46	35	33	6	70	66	16	12	2	17
Total (x 1000)	47 950	36 573	555 969	17 433	78 851	309 974	12 111	114 879	1 137	203 113	49 354	34 811	16 723	80 252	529 636	2 088 764
People younger than 25																
Education or training	18	81	39	12	19	-	43	13	56	71	22	36	68	55	69	50
Could not find full-time job	53	8	17	54	28	60	37	58	-	8	17	31	28	35	16	25
Did not want full-time job	9	10	25	22	2	39	12	13	-	20	11	6	2	9	14	18
Other reasons, no reason given	20	0	20	12	51	-	9	15	-	1	50	27	2	1	1	7
Total (x 1000)	5 229	19 730	28 098	3 178	19 825	45 377	3 025	17 081	132	60 657	4 417	3 572	7 147	14 201	113 256	344 923

Table 2:
Part-time work as % of total employment by economic activity, 1996

	B	DK	D'	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EUR15	Relative share of employment
Agriculture	6	19	18	11	9	17	6	12	(6)	28	19	26	16	22	19	15	5
Mining and quarrying	4	10	4	(0)	(0)	4	2	2	(7)	12	6	1	3	.	2	3	0
Manufacturing	4	9	9	3	3	6	4	4	.	20	7	4	3	11	8	7	21
Energy supply	4	4	4	1	1	4	4	2	.	13	5	1	.	7	6	4	1
Construction	4	6	5	6	2	5	4	4	(3)	10	4	3	6	8	7	5	8
Distribution	17	26	23	4	8	15	16	7	(9)	37	20	7	20	25	38	20	15
Hotels&Restaurants	23	47	21	5	11	21	23	11	(9)	55	17	5	32	30	51	25	4
Transport&Communication	5	12	10	2	3	10	6	4	(5)	24	8	3	7	17	11	9	6
Financial Intermediation	13	13	14	2	4	10	7	5	(6)	23	14	4	10	21	15	12	3
Business Services	15	20	23	4	14	16	9	11	12	33	23	11	17	21	21	19	7
Public Administration	14	15	14	1	3	18	8	3	(8)	24	10	1	3	12	14	12	8
Other services	26	34	28	7	18	28	22	9	13	59	24	13	14	41	40	29	21
Total employment	14	21	16	5	8	16	12	7	8	38	15	9	12	23	24	16	

Table 3:
Work on Saturday or Sunday (%) of full-timers and part-timers, 1996

	B	DK	D'	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EUR15
Full-timers																
Usually work on Saturday	18	23	23	44	39	24	31	42	19	26	25	32	28	16	24	29
Usually work on Sunday	10	16	12	14	16	9	18	8	8	14	15	14	21	14	12	12
Full-time employment (x 1000)	3 259	2 058	29 941	3 662	11 349	18 641	1 156	18 694	152	4 283	3 080	4 046	1 819	2 906	19 710	124 757
Part-timers																
Usually work on Saturday	19	37	19	33	31	26	24	32	23	29	23	36	38	28	25	25
Usually work on Sunday	9	28	8	10	13	7	12	7	(7)	15	11	10	16	25	13	11
Part-time employment (x 1000)	532	563	5 841	206	987	3 554	151	1 320	13	2 638	538	384	239	945	6 429	24 337

Table 4:
Part-time employed persons by number of hours usually worked (%), 1996



	B	DK	D ¹	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EUR15
Variable	(1)	(1)	-	.	(0)	10	9	-	(5)	.	-	-	12	-	1	2
1-10 hours	6	28	19	6	19	9	16	8	(10)	28	11	15	18	13	25	19
11-20 hours	56	27	46	38	53	36	49	41	57	33	42	36	25	26	40	40
21-30 hours	28	33	31	37	26	29	19	30	16	20	37	31	23	43	28	29
31-35 hours	8	11	4	7	1	13	2	2	(4)	17	10	4	9	14	4	7
36 + hours	1	(1)	-	13	-	3	5	19	(6)	-	-	14	3	3	1	2
Part-time (x 1000)	532	563	5841	206	987	3554	151	1320	13	2638	538	384	239	945	6429	24337
Of which younger than 25																
Variable	.	.	-	.	.	9	9	-	.	-	-	-	12	-	1	2
1-10 hours	5	59	41	6	20	10	24	6	.	55	15	13	29	45	45	37
11-20 hours	55	29	36	37	55	40	43	41	.	18	36	28	24	23	36	34
21-30 hours	27	9	20	36	24	29	14	29	.	8	30	37	14	24	13	18
31-35 hours	12	.	3	.	.	6	.	(3)	.	12	18	(6)	(4)	4	3	5
36 + hours	.	.	-	15	-	6	(7)	21	.	-	-	17	.	4	1	3
Part-time (x 1000)	52	197	281	32	198	454	30	171	(1)	607	44	36	71	142	1133	3449

Table 5:
Part-time employed persons by number of hours actually worked in the second job (%), 1996

	B	DK	D ¹	EL	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	A	P	FIN	S	UK	EUR15
No second job	95,2	90,4	96,3	94,2	96,2	90,7	97,1	97,1	95,7	91,2	95,1	90,4	92,7	89,8	90,7	92,9
Has second job but did not work	.	1,5	0,5	.	.	-	.	-	.	0,4	(0,5)	(0,8)	.	3,5	1,2	0,7
1-20 hours	4,0	7,1	2,8	3,2	2,9	6,5	1,7	2,4	.	7,9	3,4	6,5	3,5	6,0	7,4	5,4
21+ hours	(0,7)	0,9	0,4	1,9	0,7	1,3	.	0,5	.	0,4	1,0	2,3	.	0,7	0,6	0,7
Part-time (x 1000)	532	563	5841	206	987	3554	151	1320	13	2638	538	384	239	945	6429	24337

¹ Data refer to 1995

Note: % do not necessarily add to 100 due to missing values

Part-time work and a second job

7% of the part-timers have a second job. They are usually working less than 21 hours in their second job although a few part-timers are working 21 hours and more in their second job (table 5). Particularly in Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom where part-time employment is high, but also in France and Portugal, is the

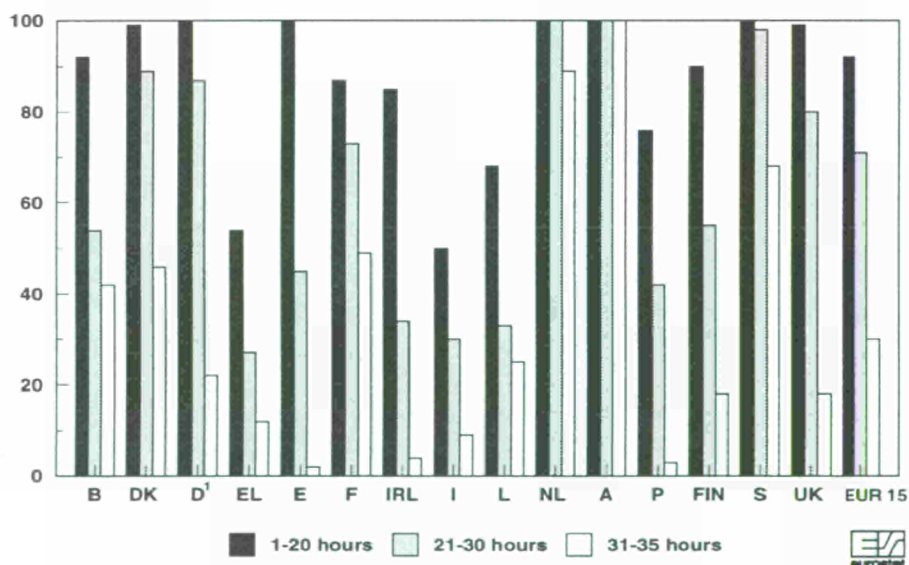
combination of part-time work with a second job above European average. The combination of a part-time job with a second job may be considered as a substitute for full-time employment. When the part-timers with a second job are excluded regardless of the number of hours worked in both jobs, the proportion of part-time employment decreases by 1 to 3 points in the Member states with relatively many persons with a second job.

The classification by part-time or full-time employment in the labour force survey

The classification by part-time or full-time job depends on a direct question in the labour force survey, except for Austria and the Netherlands where it depends on a threshold on the basis of the number of hours usually worked. When people are asked whether their job is a part-time job, they compare the number of hours in their job to the normal working hours in their occupation and branch of economic activity and they take into account the institutional context in a Member state (e.g., requirement of a formal agreement with the employer).

The extent to which a job of a particular number of hours is considered as part-time varies considerably across Member states. In Germany and the United Kingdom for example, most people working between 21 and 30 hours a week consider their job as part-time work, but, in Ireland and Italy, only 1 in 3 persons consider it as part-time (figure 5).

Figure 5:
Share of part-time work in total employment by number of hours usually worked, 1996



¹ Data for Germany refer to 1995

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