

## HOURS WORKED

Lower hours worked is one of the forms in which the benefits of productivity growth have been shared by people. 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 employment for at least one hour in the previous week.

Estimates of the hours actually worked are also based on household labour force surveys in most 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, overtime (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.

### Overview

In the large majority of OECD countries, average hours worked per employed person have fallen over the period from 1998 to 2008. 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 may reflect business cycle effects.

For the OECD as a whole, the average hours worked per employed person fell from 1821 annual hours in 1998 to 1764 in 2008; this is equivalent to a reduction of just less than one and a half hours over a 40-hour work-week. Annual working hours fell in a majority of countries, increasing only in Denmark, Greece, Mexico, the Netherlands and Turkey. Reductions in annual hours worked over this period were most marked in Korea, Ireland, Luxembourg, Spain and France.

Although one should exercise caution when comparing levels across countries, it is clear that actual hours worked are significantly above the OECD average in the Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Korea and Poland and significantly below the OECD average in France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Norway.

### Comparability

National statisticians and the OECD work to ensure that hours worked data are as comparable as possible. These data are however based on a range of sources of varying reliability. For example, for a number of EU countries, data are OECD estimates based on results from the *Spring European Labour Force Survey*; these results reflect a single observation in the year, and have to be supplemented by information from other sources on hours not worked due to public holidays and annual paid leave. Annual working hours reported for the other 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.

### Sources

- OECD (2009), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD, Paris.

### Further information Analytical publications

- Durand, M., J. Martin and A. Saint-Martin (2004), "The 35-hour week: Portrait of a French exception", *OECD Observer*, No. 244, September 2004, OECD, Paris.
- Evans, J., D. Lippoldt and P. Marianna (2001), *Trends in Working Hours in OECD Countries*, OECD Labour Market and Social Policy Occasional Papers, No. 45, OECD, Paris.

### Methodological publications

- OECD (2004), "Clocking In (and Out): Several Facets of Working Time", *OECD Employment Outlook: 2004 Edition*, Chapter 1, see also Annex I.A1, OECD, Paris.

### Web sites

- OECD Employment Data, [www.oecd.org/els/employment/](http://www.oecd.org/els/employment/).
- OECD Labour Statistics Database, [www.oecd.org/statistics/labour](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/labour).



**Average hours actually worked**

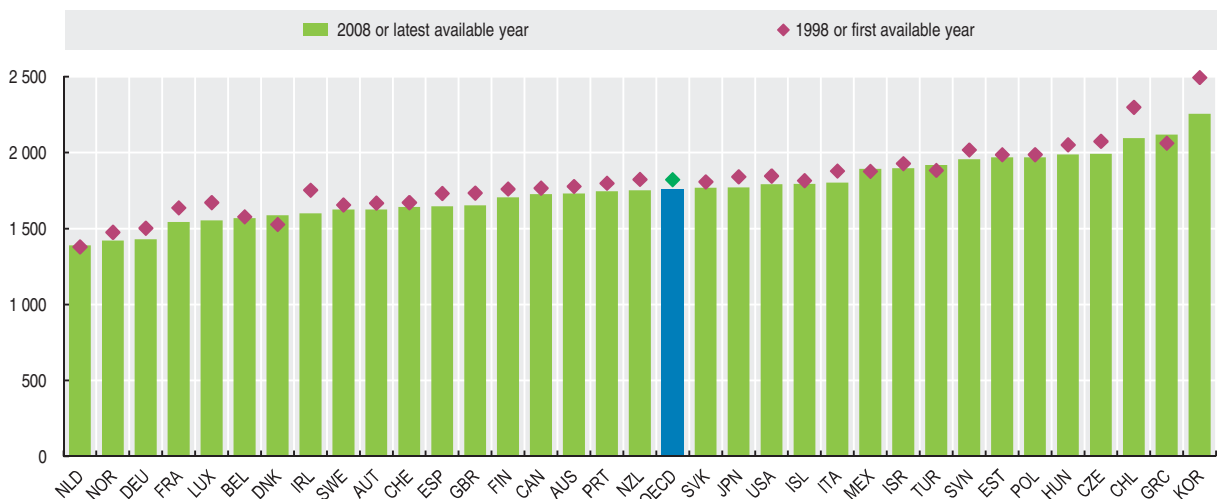
Hours per year per person in employment

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Australia	1 793	1 792	1 784	1 778	1 763	1 783	1 756	1 734	1 737	1 735	1 730	1 728	1 730	1 732
Austria	1 654	1 659	1 667	1 668	1 656	1 658	1 657	1 652	1 658	1 663	1 652	1 642	1 635	1 626
Belgium	1 580	1 554	1 567	1 578	1 581	1 545	1 577	1 580	1 575	1 549	1 565	1 566	1 560	1 568
Canada	1 761	1 774	1 767	1 767	1 769	1 768	1 762	1 744	1 734	1 752	1 738	1 738	1 735	1 727
Czech Republic	2 064	2 066	2 067	2 075	2 088	2 092	2 000	1 980	1 972	1 986	2 002	1 997	1 985	1 992
Denmark	1 499	1 494	1 512	1 528	1 539	1 554	1 562	1 556	1 552	1 556	1 556	1 562	1 577	1 587
Finland	1 776	1 775	1 770	1 761	1 765	1 750	1 734	1 728	1 720	1 724	1 718	1 714	1 710	1 705
France	1 651	1 655	1 649	1 637	1 630	1 591	1 579	1 537	1 533	1 561	1 559	1 536	1 553	1 544
Germany	1 534	1 518	1 509	1 503	1 492	1 473	1 458	1 445	1 439	1 442	1 434	1 430	1 431	1 430
Greece	2 123	2 098	2 065	2 063	2 107	2 121	2 123	2 106	2 116	2 064	2 081	2 150	2 122	2 120
Hungary	2 039	2 035	2 059	2 052	2 067	2 061	2 019	2 027	1 998	1 998	1 997	1 993	1 988	1 988
Iceland	1 832	1 860	1 839	1 817	1 873	1 885	1 847	1 812	1 807	1 810	1 794	1 795	1 807	1 795
Ireland	1 875	1 882	1 832	1 754	1 725	1 719	1 713	1 698	1 671	1 668	1 654	1 642	1 631	1 601
Italy	1 859	1 873	1 863	1 880	1 876	1 861	1 843	1 831	1 826	1 826	1 819	1 815	1 817	1 802
Japan	1 884	1 892	1 865	1 842	1 810	1 821	1 809	1 798	1 799	1 787	1 775	1 784	1 785	1 772
Korea	2 658	2 648	2 592	2 496	2 502	2 520	2 506	2 465	2 434	2 404	2 364	2 357	2 316	2 256
Luxembourg	1 719	1 691	1 678	1 672	1 669	1 662	1 646	1 635	1 630	1 586	1 570	1 580	1 515	1 555
Mexico	1 857	1 902	1 927	1 878	1 922	1 888	1 864	1 888	1 857	1 849	1 909	1 883	1 871	1 893
Netherlands	1 394	1 421	1 414	1 380	1 361	1 374	1 373	1 348	1 363	1 362	1 375	1 389	1 390	1 389
New Zealand	1 842	1 833	1 821	1 824	1 838	1 830	1 817	1 817	1 813	1 827	1 810	1 787	1 771	1 753
Norway	1 488	1 483	1 478	1 476	1 473	1 455	1 429	1 414	1 399	1 417	1 420	1 414	1 417	1 422
Poland	..	..	..	..	..	1 988	1 974	1 979	1 984	1 983	1 994	1 985	1 976	1 969
Portugal	1 897	1 848	1 812	1 799	1 812	1 765	1 769	1 767	1 742	1 763	1 752	1 757	1 727	1 745
Slovak Republic	1 878	1 842	1 839	1 809	1 809	1 815	1 790	1 733	1 678	1 733	1 768	1 773	1 776	1 769
Spain	1 733	1 729	1 728	1 732	1 732	1 731	1 727	1 721	1 706	1 690	1 668	1 656	1 636	1 647
Sweden	1 640	1 653	1 658	1 656	1 665	1 642	1 618	1 595	1 582	1 605	1 605	1 599	1 615	1 625
Switzerland	1 704	1 678	1 665	1 672	1 694	1 688	1 650	1 630	1 643	1 673	1 667	1 652	1 643	1 642
Turkey	1 876	1 892	1 878	1 884	1 925	1 937	1 942	1 943	1 943	1 918	..	..	..	..
United Kingdom	1 743	1 742	1 741	1 735	1 723	1 712	1 715	1 696	1 677	1 672	1 676	1 671	1 673	1 653
United States	1 845	1 835	1 846	1 847	1 847	1 836	1 814	1 810	1 800	1 802	1 800	1 801	1 798	1 792
OECD total	1 838	1 840	1 835	1 821	1 820	1 811	1 796	1 788	1 778	1 777	1 777	1 774	1 769	1 764
Chile	..	2 312	2 256	2 300	2 277	2 263	2 241	2 250	2 234	2 232	2 157	2 165	2 128	2 095
Estonia	..	..	..	..	..	1 987	1 978	1 983	1 985	1 996	2 010	2 001	1 999	1 969
Israel	1 956	1 966	1 966	1 929	1 945	1 966	1 919	1 940	1 924	1 930	1 989	1 888	1 930	1 898
Slovenia	1 991	2 006	2 015	2 019	2 006	1 983	1 987	1 983	1 960	1 973	1 975	1 956	1 956	1 956

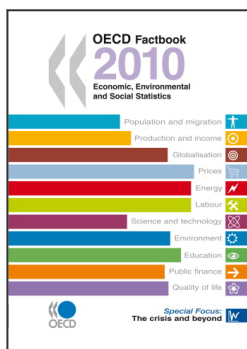
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/825563825252>

**Average hours actually worked**

Hours per year per person in employment



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