

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

Part-time work accounted for a substantial share of overall employment growth in many OECD countries between 1994 and 2007. Part-time work has been an important factor behind employment growth of groups that are often under-represented in the labour force, such as women, youths and, to a lesser extent, older workers.

Recent surveys in a large number of OECD countries show that most people who work part-time do so from choice. This suggests that countries with little part-time employment could foster increased employment by policies that promote the availability of part-time positions. This would particularly benefit women with young children.

Definition

Part-time employment refers to persons who usually work less than 30 hours per week in their main job. Both employees and the self-employed may be part-time workers.

Employment is generally measured through household labour force surveys and, according to the ILO Guidelines, employed persons are defined as those aged 15 or over who report that they have worked in gainful employment for at least one hour in the previous week. The rates shown here refer to the numbers of persons who usually work less than 30 hours per week as a percentage of the total number of those in employment.

Comparability

All OECD countries use the ILO Guidelines for measuring employment, but the operational definitions used in national labour force surveys vary slightly in Iceland and Turkey. Employment levels are also likely to be affected by changes in the survey design and/or the survey conduct, but employment rates are likely to be fairly consistent over time. Information on the number of hours worked is collected in household labour force surveys and the rates shown here are considered to be of good comparability.

Long-term trends

For the OECD as a whole, the part-time employment rate increased by 3.5 percentage points between 1998 and 2007. Part-time employment rates grew considerably – by more than 5 percentage points – in the Netherlands, Austria and Germany, while they fell – by more than 1 percentage point – in several countries including Iceland, Poland, France and Greece.

The chart shows great variation between countries in part-time employment in 2007. In the Netherlands and Switzerland over 25% of all those in employment were working part-time, while the incidence of part-time employment were under 10% in the Slovak Republic, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Greece, Turkey, Korea and Portugal. The average incidence of part-time employment for the OECD as a whole was 15% in 2007 and was three percentage points higher in the EU27 countries.

Source

- OECD (2008), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD, Paris.
- For Non-Member Countries: National Sources.

Further information

Analytical publications

- OECD (1999), *Implementing the OECD Jobs Strategy: Assessing Performance and Policy*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2002-2008), *Babies and Bosses – Reconciling Work and Family Life*, series, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2003), *The Sources of Economic Growth in OECD Countries*, OECD, Paris.

Statistical publications

- OECD (2008), *Labour Force Statistics*, OECD, Paris.

Websites

- OECD Productivity Database, www.oecd.org/statistics/productivity.
- OECD Labour Statistics Database, www.oecd.org/statistics/labour.
- OECD Employment Data, www.oecd.org/els/employment/data.



Incidence of part-time employment

As a percentage of total employment

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	24.2	24.3	24.7	23.8	24.5	24.4	24.1
Austria	..	11.1	10.9	10.8	11.5	12.3	12.2	12.4	13.6	13.5	15.4	16.0	17.3	17.2
Belgium	14.6	14.6	14.8	15.0	15.6	19.9	19.0	17.0	17.9	18.0	18.9	18.5	19.3	18.3
Canada	18.9	18.8	19.1	19.1	18.8	18.4	18.1	18.1	18.8	18.9	18.5	18.3	18.1	18.2
Czech Republic	3.6	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.2	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.3	3.5
Denmark	17.3	16.9	16.6	17.2	17.1	15.3	16.1	14.7	16.0	15.7	17.3	17.6	18.1	17.7
Finland	8.9	8.7	8.5	9.3	9.7	9.9	10.4	10.5	11.0	11.3	11.3	11.2	11.4	11.7
France	13.8	14.2	14.0	14.8	14.7	14.6	14.2	13.8	13.8	12.9	13.3	13.4	13.3	13.4
Germany	13.5	14.2	14.9	15.8	16.6	17.1	17.6	18.3	18.8	19.6	20.1	21.8	22.0	22.2
Greece	7.8	7.8	8.0	8.3	9.1	8.0	5.5	4.9	5.6	5.6	6.0	6.1	7.5	7.8
Hungary	..	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.9	3.2	2.9	2.5	2.6	3.2	3.3	3.2	2.7	2.8
Iceland	22.6	22.5	20.9	22.4	23.2	21.2	20.4	20.4	20.1	16.0	16.6	16.4	16.0	15.9
Ireland	13.5	14.3	14.2	15.0	17.6	17.9	18.1	17.9	18.6	19.3	19.3	19.6	19.9	20.3
Italy	10.0	10.5	10.5	11.3	11.2	11.8	12.2	12.2	11.9	12.0	14.8	14.6	14.9	15.1
Japan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	17.7	18.2	18.1	18.3	18.0	18.9
Korea	4.5	4.3	4.3	5.0	6.7	7.7	7.0	7.3	7.6	7.7	8.4	9.0	8.8	8.9
Luxembourg	10.7	11.3	10.4	11.0	12.6	12.1	12.4	13.3	12.5	13.3	13.2	13.9	12.7	13.1
Mexico	..	16.6	14.9	15.5	15.0	13.7	13.5	13.7	13.5	13.4	15.1	..	..	..
Netherlands	28.9	29.4	29.3	29.1	30.0	30.4	32.1	33.0	33.9	34.6	35.0	35.7	35.5	36.1
New Zealand	21.0	20.9	21.9	22.3	22.7	23.0	22.2	22.4	22.6	22.3	22.0	21.7	21.3	22.0
Norway	21.5	21.4	21.6	21.0	20.8	20.7	20.2	20.1	20.6	21.0	21.1	20.8	21.1	20.4
Poland	..	..	..	11.9	11.8	14.0	12.8	11.6	11.7	11.5	12.0	11.7	10.8	10.1
Portugal	9.5	8.6	9.2	10.2	10.0	9.4	9.4	9.2	9.7	10.0	9.6	9.8	9.3	10.0
Slovak Republic	2.7	2.3	2.1	2.0	2.0	1.8	1.9	1.9	1.6	2.3	2.8	2.6	2.5	2.6
Spain	6.4	7.0	7.5	7.9	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.8	7.7	8.0	8.5	11.3	11.1	10.9
Sweden	15.8	15.1	14.8	14.2	13.5	14.5	14.0	13.9	13.8	14.1	14.4	13.5	13.4	14.4
Switzerland	23.2	22.9	23.7	24.0	24.2	24.8	24.4	24.8	24.8	25.1	24.9	25.1	25.5	25.4
Turkey	8.8	6.4	5.5	6.1	6.0	7.7	9.4	6.2	6.6	6.0	6.6	5.8	7.9	8.4
United Kingdom	22.4	22.3	22.9	22.9	23.0	22.9	23.0	22.7	23.3	23.7	24.0	23.5	23.4	23.3
United States	14.2	14.0	13.9	13.5	13.4	13.3	12.6	12.8	13.1	13.2	13.2	12.8	12.6	12.6
EU27 total	..	..	..	..	..	..	16.4	16.3	16.2	16.6	17.2	17.8	18.1	18.2
OECD total	11.3	11.6	11.5	11.8	11.9	12.1	11.9	12.1	14.6	14.7	15.1	15.3	15.2	15.4
Brazil	..	16.2	15.3	15.9	16.3	16.9	..	16.0	17.0	17.1	17.3	17.9	18.0	17.2

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