

141/2020 - 29 September 2020

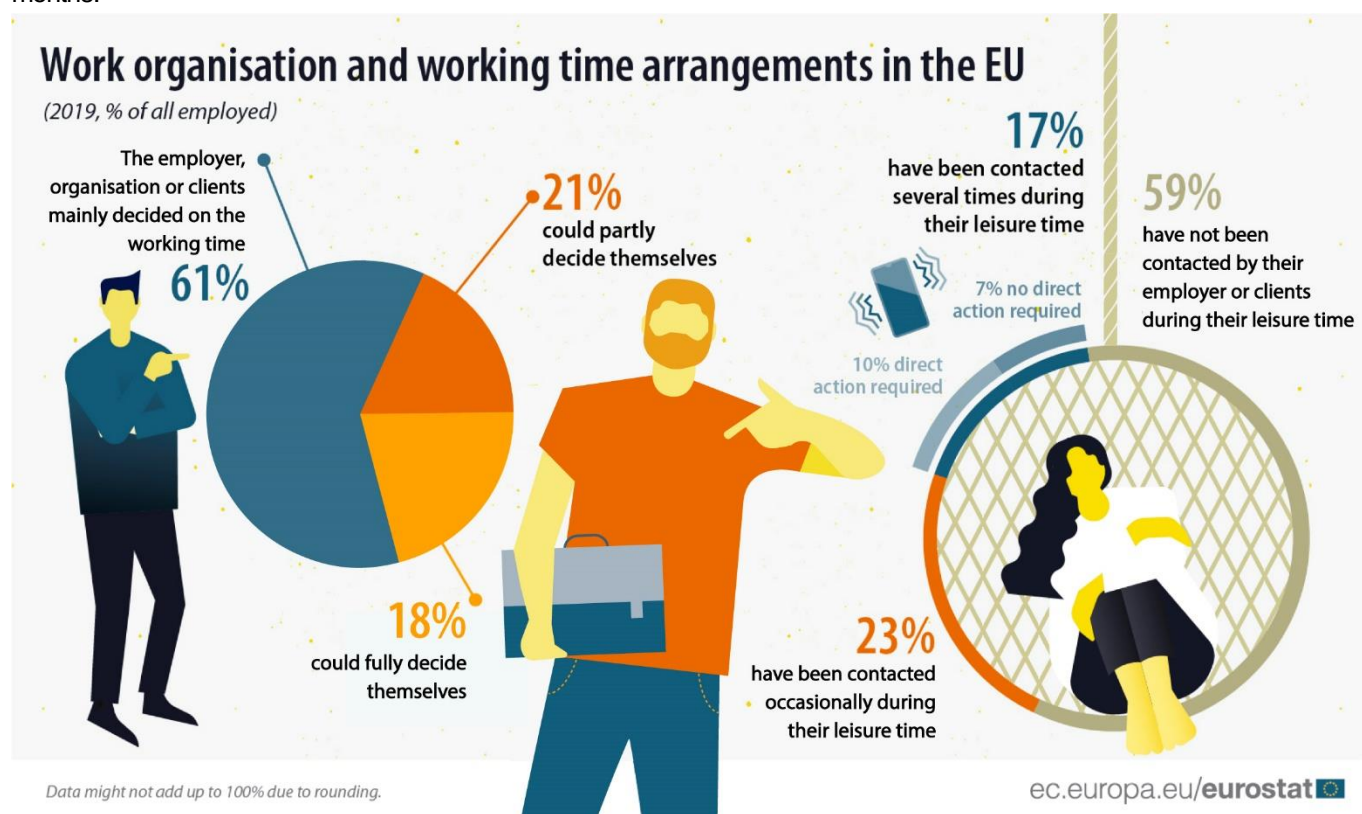
Work organisation and working time arrangements in 2019

Employer mainly decides on working time in the EU

Two in three workers can easily take one or two hours off at short notice

In 2019, the employer, organisation or clients mainly decided on the working time of almost 118 million of the 194 million employed people aged 15 to 74 in the **European Union (EU)**. In other words, the employer, organisation or clients determined the start and end time of the working day in the main job for the majority of the employed (61%) in 2019.

Moreover, almost one in five workers (17%) reported to have been contacted several times during their leisure time in the last two months, while almost one in four workers (23%) had been contacted occasionally. The majority of employed people in the **EU** (59%) reported not being contacted by their employer or their clients during the leisure time in the last 2 months.



Although employed people in the majority of the EU Member States reported that their employer, organisation or clients decided on their working time, almost 60% of the employed in the **EU** rarely or never faced unforeseen demands, such as requirements by tasks, clients or superiors, with the consequence of changing the working time in their main job. Around one in five employed people faced such unforeseen demands at least once a week (21%) or once a month (19%).

In addition, taking one or two *hours* off for personal or family matters at short notice was considered as very to fairly easy for 66% of the employed. Similarly, the majority of the employed (55%) considered taking one or two *days* of leave at short notice as very or fairly easy.

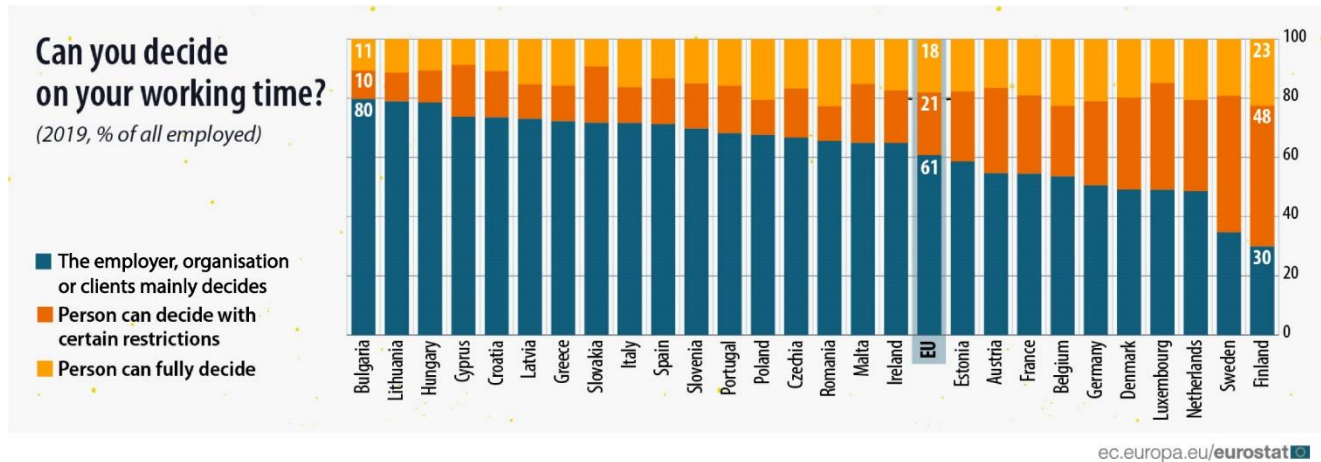
These selected findings, issued by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**, come from a special data collection from the 2019 European Labour Force Survey on work organisation and working time arrangements, presented in a [Statistics Explained article](#).

Workers in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Hungary have the least influence over their working time

In 2019, the employer, organisation or clients mainly decided on the working time for the majority of employed people in the **EU** (61%), while 21% of the employed could partly and 18% could fully decide themselves.

Workers with the least influence over their working time are found in **Bulgaria**, as for 80% of them the decision on their working time was taken by their employer, organisation or clients, as well as in **Lithuania** and **Hungary** (both 79%). Workers in **Cyprus** and **Croatia** (both 74%) and **Latvia** (73%) followed them closely.

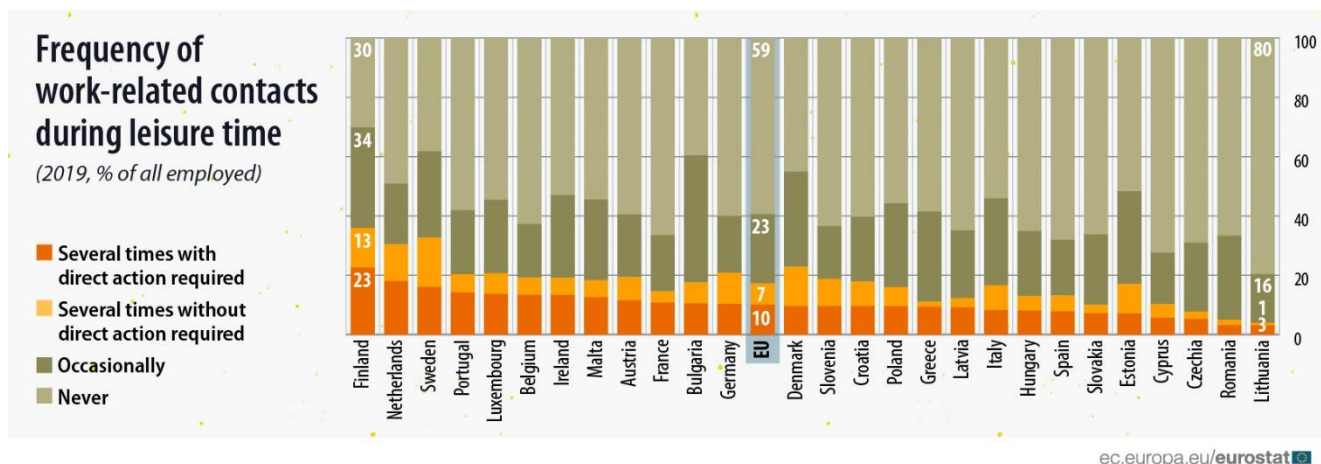
In contrast, the workers with the highest influence over their working time were in **Finland**, as the employer, organisation or clients mainly decided on the working time for only 30% of them, and in **Sweden** (35%). They were followed by the workers in **Denmark**, **Luxembourg** and the **Netherlands** (all 49%).



Highest share of workers contacted several times during leisure time with direct action required in Finland

In 2019, the majority of the employed (59%) in the **EU** reported not being contacted in the last two months by their employer or their clients during the leisure time and 23% reported to be contacted occasionally.

However, almost one in five workers (17%) in the **EU** have been contacted several times during their leisure time. Direct action before the next working day was required for 10% of the employed, while 7% of the employed have been contacted several times during their leisure with no direct action required.



Finland reported the largest share of the employed, who have been contacted several times during their leisure time and who had to undertake action before the next working day (23%), followed by the **Netherlands** (18%), **Sweden** (16%), **Portugal** and **Luxembourg** (both 14%).

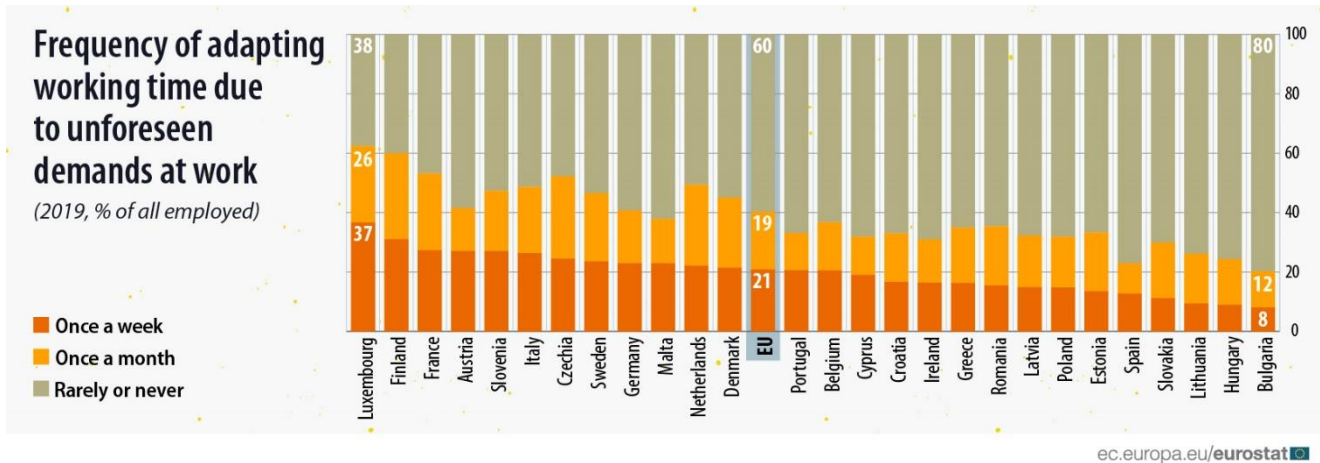
In contrast, the lowest shares of work-related contacts during leisure time with direct action required were recorded in **Lithuania** and **Romania** (both 3%), **Czechia** (5%) and **Cyprus** (6%).

One in five employed adapt their working time at least once a week due to unforeseen demands at work

In 2019, around one in five employed (21%) faced unforeseen demands with the consequence of changing the working time in the main job at least once a week.

Among the EU Member States, more than one in three people employed in **Luxembourg** (37%) adapted their working time at least once a week due to unforeseen demands in 2019, followed by those employed in **Finland** (31%), **France**, **Austria** and **Slovenia** (all 27%), as well as **Italy** (26%).

In contrast, the lowest shares were reported in **Bulgaria** (8%), **Lithuania** and **Hungary** (both 9%), followed by **Slovakia** (11%), **Spain** (13%) and **Estonia** (14%).

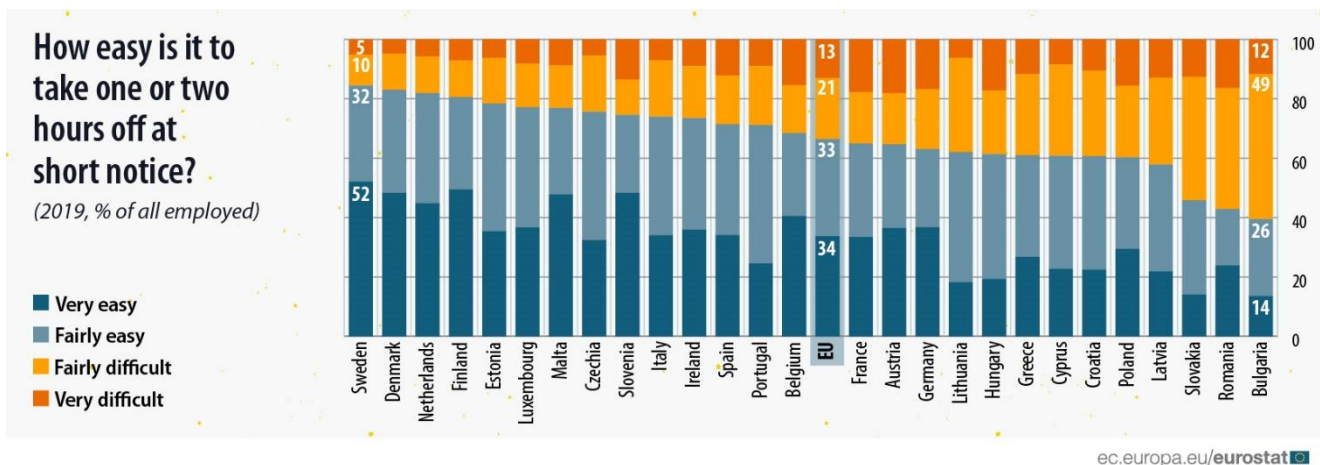


High degree of freedom in taking a few hours or couple of days off at short notice in the EU

In 2019, the employed across the **EU** considered taking *one or two hours* off for personal or family matters at a short notice very easy (reported by 34% of the employed) or fairly easy (33%), while for one in five workers it was perceived as fairly (21%) or very difficult (13%).

Among the EU Member States, **Sweden** reported the highest share of employed people that considered taking one or two hours off at a short notice very or fairly easy (84%), closely followed by **Denmark** (83%), the **Netherlands** (82%) and **Finland** (81%).

In contrast, the majority of the employed in **Bulgaria** (60%) considered taking one or two hours off at short notice very or fairly difficult, followed by those employed in **Romania** (57%) and **Slovakia** (54%).



Similarly, the majority of the employed considered taking *one or two days* of leave at short notice (within three working days) as fairly easy (36%) or very easy (19%), while 29% of the employed perceived it as fairly and 16% as very difficult.

Geographical information

The **European Union (EU)** includes Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland and Sweden.

Methods and definitions

The European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS) is the largest European household sample survey providing quarterly and annual results on labour participation of people aged 15 and over as well as on persons outside the labour force. It covers residents in private households. Conscripts in military or community service are not included in the results. The EU-LFS uses the same definitions in all participating countries which means that the results are comparable across countries. Concepts and definitions used in the survey follow the guidelines of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The EU-LFS ad hoc module on work organisation and working time arrangements has been implemented in 2019 and covers all employed persons aged 15 years and over (16 years and over in Spain, Italy and the United Kingdom, 15-74 years in Denmark, Estonia, Latvia, Hungary, Finland, Sweden and Norway and, and 16-74 years in Iceland).

Employed persons are defined as persons who during the reference week performed work, even for just one hour, for pay, profit or family gain, or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent, for example because of illness, holidays, industrial dispute or education and training.

Decision on working time refers to the party who decides on the start and end of the working day of the employed persons in their main job. The decision can be taken fully by the employed persons themselves, partly by the employed persons with certain restrictions or for employees by the employer or organisation and for self-employed persons by clients, tasks or legal regulations.

Freedom to take hours off measures the possibility to take one or two hours off in the main job for personal or family matters within one working day. The terminology 'at short notice' consequently refers for this indicator to 'within one working day'. Please note that for those who reported that they can fully decide on their working time, the question on the possibility to take hours off was not asked and the answer was imputed as 'very easy'.

Freedom in taking leave measures the possibility to take one or two days of leave within three working days in the main job. For this indicator, the terminology 'at short notice' consequently refers to 'within three working days'. Days off are understood as holidays (excluding for example sick leave).

Contact during leisure time refers to contact by e.g. phone or e-mail during leisure time in the last two months (in the main job). Leisure time refers to 'time outside regular working hours'. Being contacted to take direct action means that action should be taken before the next working day.

Changing working time to face unforeseen demands at work include situations where the employed persons have to change their working time in their main job as required by tasks, clients or superiors.

For more information

Eurostat [database](#) on the 2019 LFS ad hoc module on work organisation and working time arrangements

Eurostat [Statistics Explained article](#) on flexibility at work in 2019

Eurostat [Statistics Explained article](#) on job autonomy and pressure at work in 2019 (to be published on 6 October)

Eurostat [Statistics Explained article](#) on main place of work and commuting time in 2019 (to be published on 15 October)

Eurostat [quality assessment report](#) on the 2019 LFS ad hoc module on work organisation and working time arrangements

European Statistics [Code of Practice](#)

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Work organisation and working time arrangements, 2019

(percentage of the employed aged 15 years and over)

| | Persons in employment by working time flexibility | | | Persons in employment by frequency of work-related contacts during leisure time (in last two months) | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---|-------------------------|--|--------------|---|---|
| | Employer, organisation or clients mainly decides | Person can decide with certain restrictions | Person can fully decide | Never | Occasionally | Several times with direct action required | Several times without direct actions required |
| EU* | 61% | 21% | 18% | 59% | 23% | 10% | 7% |
| Belgium | 54% | 24% | 23% | 63% | 18% | 13% | 6% |
| Bulgaria | 80% | 10% | 11% | 40% | 43% | 11% | 7% |
| Czechia | 67% | 17% | 17% | 69% | 23% | 5% | 3% |
| Denmark | 49% | 31% | 20% | 45% | 32% | 10% | 13% |
| Germany | 50% | 28% | 21% | 60% | 19% | 10% | 11% |
| Estonia | 59% | 24% | 18% | 52% | 31% | 7% | 10% |
| Ireland | 65% | 18% | 17% | 53% | 28% | 13% | 6% |
| Greece | 72% | 12% | 16% | 58% | 30% | 9% | 2% |
| Spain | 71% | 16% | 13% | 68% | 19% | 8% | 5% |
| France | 54% | 27% | 19% | 66% | 19% | 11% | 4% |
| Croatia | 74% | 16% | 11% | 60% | 22% | 10% | 8% |
| Italy | 72% | 12% | 16% | 54% | 29% | 8% | 8% |
| Cyprus | 74% | 18% | 9% | 72% | 17% | 6% | 4% |
| Latvia | 73% | 12% | 15% | 65% | 23% | 9% | 3% |
| Lithuania | 79% | 10% | 11% | 80% | 16% | 3% | 1% |
| Luxembourg | 49% | 36% | 15% | 55% | 25% | 14% | 7% |
| Hungary | 79% | 11% | 11% | 65% | 22% | 8% | 5% |
| Malta | 65% | 20% | 15% | 54% | 27% | 13% | 6% |
| Netherlands | 49% | 31% | 21% | 49% | 20% | 18% | 12% |
| Austria | 55% | 29% | 17% | 59% | 21% | 12% | 8% |
| Poland | 68% | 12% | 21% | 56% | 28% | 10% | 6% |
| Portugal | 68% | 16% | 16% | 58% | 22% | 14% | 6% |
| Romania | 66% | 12% | 23% | 67% | 28% | 3% | 2% |
| Slovenia | 70% | 15% | 15% | 63% | 18% | 10% | 9% |
| Slovakia | 72% | 19% | 9% | 66% | 24% | 7% | 3% |
| Finland | 30% | 48% | 23% | 30% | 34% | 23% | 13% |
| Sweden | 35% | 46% | 19% | 38% | 29% | 16% | 17% |
| United Kingdom | 56% | 22% | 22% | 50% | 26% | 16% | 8% |
| Iceland | 49% | 29% | 22% | 47% | 24% | 13% | 15% |
| Norway | 48% | 39% | 13% | 40% | 28% | 16% | 17% |
| Switzerland | 3% | 83% | 14% | 45% | 28% | 19% | 8% |
| Turkey | 61% | 9% | 30% | 69% | 22% | 3% | 7% |

* EU represents the European Union of 27 Member States after 1 February 2020.

Source datasets: [lfsq_19fxwt01](#) (working time decision) and [lfsq_19fxwt14](#) (work-related contacts during leisure time)

Percentages exclude non-response

Work organisation and working time arrangements, 2019

(percentage of the employed aged 15 years and over)

| | Persons in employment by frequency of adapting working time to fulfil work tasks | | | Persons in employment by level of difficulty to take one or two hours off at short notice | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-------------|--------------|---|-------------|------------------|----------------|
| | Rarely or never | Once a week | Once a month | Very easy | Fairly easy | Fairly difficult | Very difficult |
| EU* | 60% | 21% | 19% | 34% | 33% | 21% | 13% |
| Belgium | 63% | 21% | 16% | 41% | 28% | 16% | 15% |
| Bulgaria | 80% | 8% | 12% | 14% | 26% | 49% | 12% |
| Czechia | 48% | 24% | 28% | 33% | 43% | 19% | 5% |
| Denmark | 55% | 21% | 24% | 48% | 35% | 12% | 5% |
| Germany | 59% | 23% | 18% | 37% | 26% | 20% | 17% |
| Estonia | 67% | 14% | 20% | 35% | 43% | 15% | 6% |
| Ireland | 69% | 16% | 15% | 36% | 37% | 17% | 9% |
| Greece | 65% | 16% | 19% | 27% | 34% | 27% | 12% |
| Spain | 77% | 13% | 10% | 34% | 37% | 16% | 12% |
| France | 47% | 27% | 26% | 33% | 31% | 17% | 18% |
| Croatia | 67% | 17% | 16% | 22% | 38% | 29% | 11% |
| Italy | 51% | 26% | 22% | 34% | 40% | 19% | 7% |
| Cyprus | 68% | 19% | 13% | 23% | 38% | 31% | 8% |
| Latvia | 68% | 15% | 17% | 22% | 36% | 29% | 13% |
| Lithuania | 74% | 9% | 17% | 18% | 44% | 32% | 6% |
| Luxembourg | 38% | 37% | 26% | 37% | 40% | 15% | 8% |
| Hungary | 76% | 9% | 15% | 19% | 42% | 21% | 17% |
| Malta | 62% | 23% | 15% | 48% | 29% | 14% | 9% |
| Netherlands | 51% | 22% | 27% | 45% | 37% | 12% | 6% |
| Austria | 58% | 27% | 14% | 36% | 28% | 17% | 18% |
| Poland | 68% | 15% | 17% | 29% | 31% | 24% | 16% |
| Portugal | 67% | 21% | 13% | 25% | 47% | 20% | 9% |
| Romania | 65% | 16% | 20% | 24% | 19% | 41% | 16% |
| Slovenia | 53% | 27% | 20% | 48% | 26% | 12% | 14% |
| Slovakia | 70% | 11% | 19% | 14% | 32% | 41% | 13% |
| Finland | 40% | 31% | 29% | 50% | 31% | 12% | 7% |
| Sweden | 53% | 24% | 23% | 52% | 32% | 10% | 5% |
| United Kingdom | 60% | 24% | 16% | 42% | 30% | 17% | 11% |
| Iceland | 71% | 12% | 17% | 49% | 30% | 12% | 10% |
| Norway | 46% | 27% | 26% | 45% | 36% | 13% | 7% |
| Switzerland | 48% | 27% | 26% | 40% | 38% | 15% | 8% |
| Turkey | 70% | 18% | 12% | 38% | 41% | 18% | 3% |

* EU represents the European Union of 27 Member States after 1 February 2020.

Source datasets: [lfsa_19fxwt11](#) (frequency of adapting working time) and [lfsa_19fxwt04](#) (level of difficulty to take one or two hours off at short notice)

Percentages exclude non-response