

*Panel 2 - Ageing workforce: is it possible without better working conditions ?*

## Some key issues in the working conditions of ageing women and men

---

Gérard Valenduc

Fondation Travail-Université (Namur)

[www.ftu-namur.org](http://www.ftu-namur.org)

Associate professor at the Universities of Louvain-la-Neuve and Namur

[www.uclouvain.be/gerard.valenduc](http://www.uclouvain.be/gerard.valenduc)

1

- The spin-off effects of occupational segregation on working conditions

2

- Ageing, working time and work-life balance

3

- Impacts of unpaid work on ageing workers

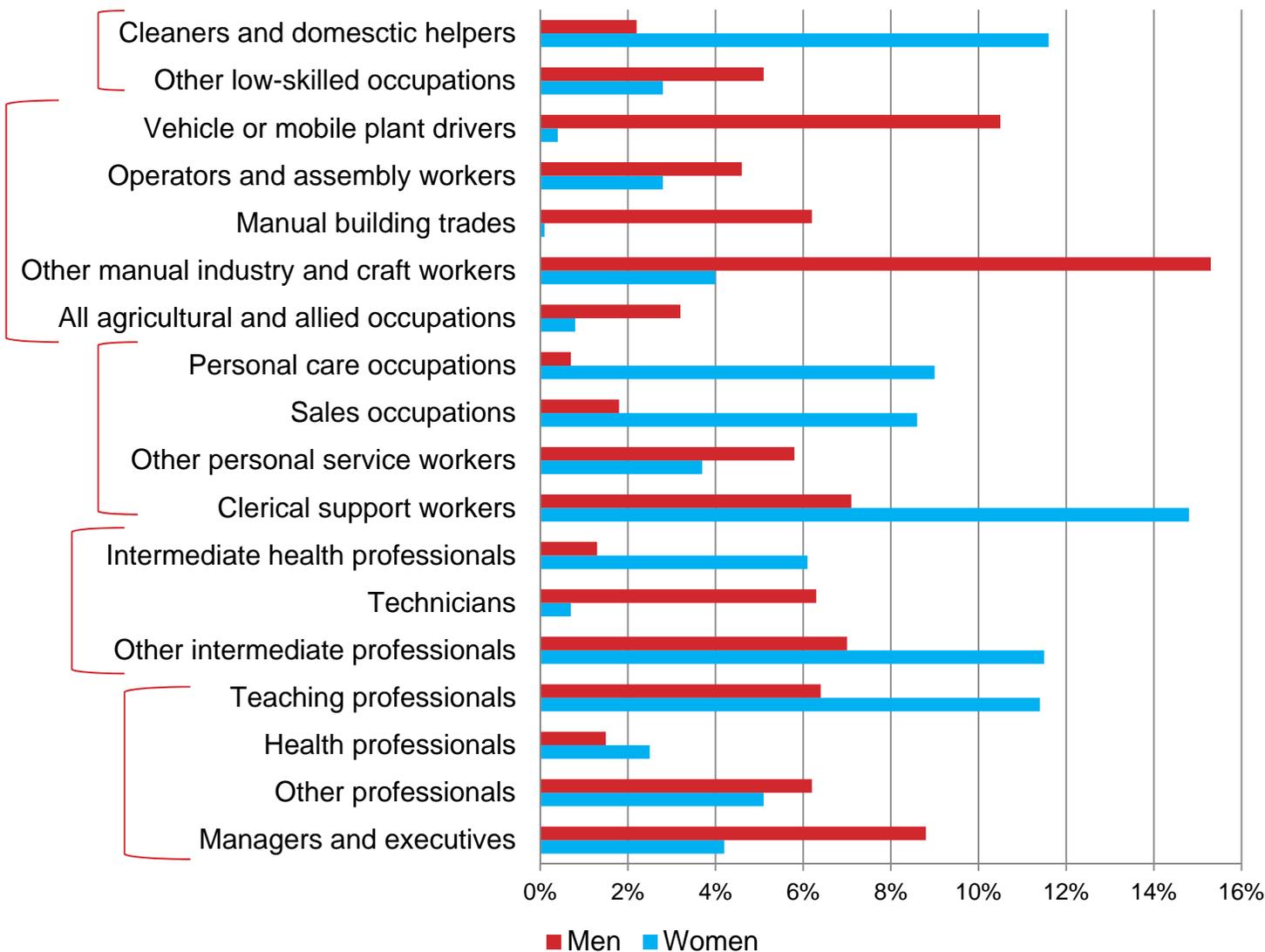
4

- Gender-differentiated effects of "working longer"

5

- Conclusions

# Occupational segregation among 50+ workers...



% of total wage employment of women and men in the 50-64 age group, by occupational categories (EU27, EWCS 2010)

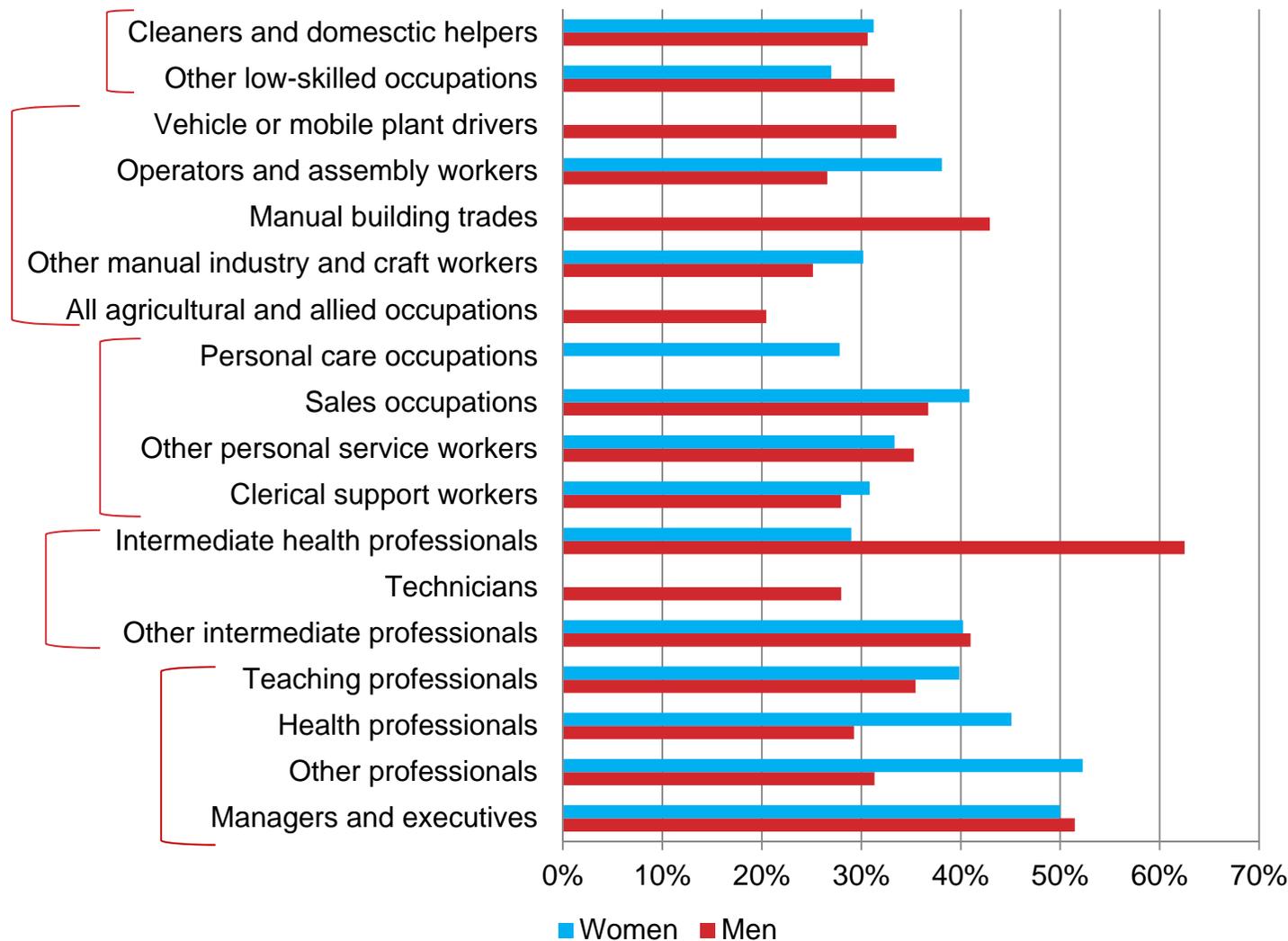
✓ *Occupational segregation is more pronounced among older than younger workers*

## ... and some effects on working conditions

Determinants of reply "yes, work affects negatively my health" among wage employees aged 50 to 59 (EU27, EWCS 2010)	Men	Women
	Odd ratio	Odd ratio
55-59 (vs 50-54)	1.01	0.98
Technicians and intermediate professionals (vs managers and professionals)	1.37	0.59
Semi-skilled service workers (vs managers and professionals)	0.93	0.37
Semi-skilled manual workers (vs managers and professionals)	1.48	0.41
Low-skilled workers (vs managers and professionals)	0.98	0.44
Shift work or night work (5 nights per month) - yes (vs no)	1.44	1.60
Working hours do not fit with non-working life (vs fit well)	2.26	1.84
Painful or tiring positions at least half of the time – yes (vs no)	2.58	3.63
Working to tight deadlines at least half of the time – yes (vs no)	1.39	1.49
Low social support at work (vs good)	1.43	1.54
Low level of autonomy in work (vs not low)	1.50	1.25
Job insecurity – yes (vs no)	1.13	1.17
No career prospect (vs yes)	1.37	1.30

*The odd ratio of each reference group = 1.00; odd ratio >1 means "more likely to..."*

# Ageing, working time and work-life balance

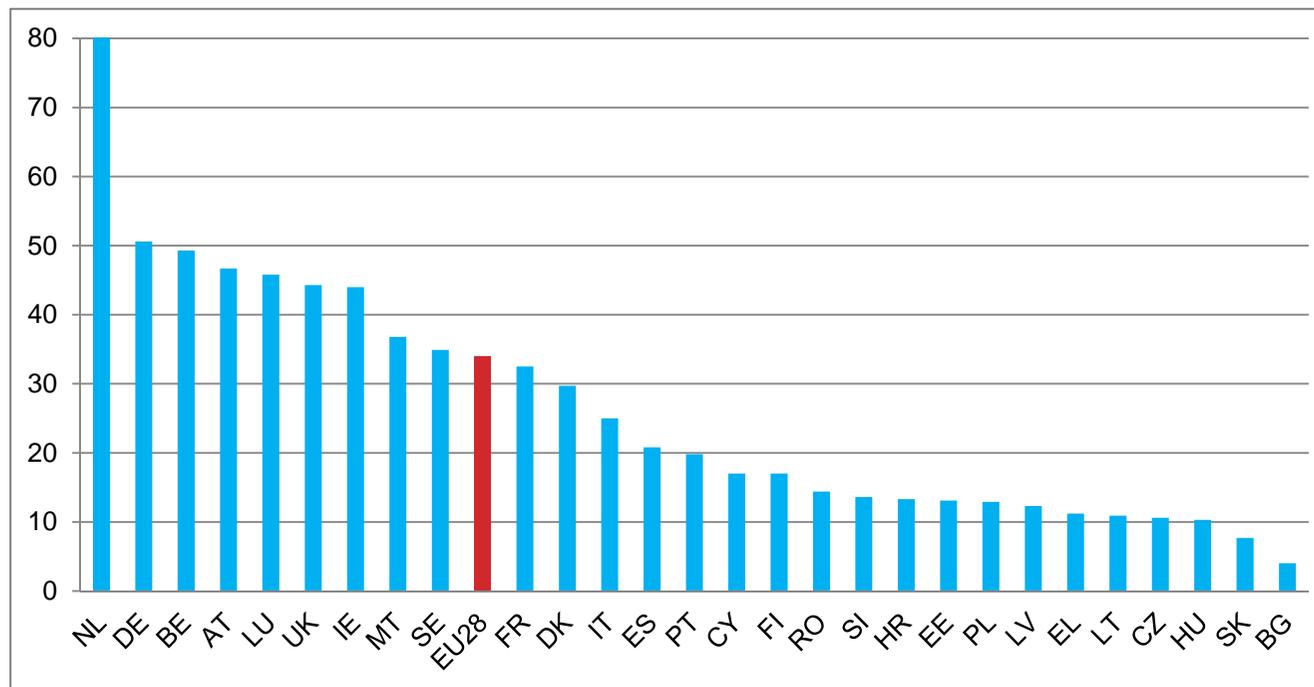


% of M/F full-time employees in the 50-64 age group who wish **less working hours**, by occupational categories (EU27, EWCS 2010)

✓ *Over 50 years, 34% of male and 36% of female employees would like to reduce their working hours*

# Ageing, working time and work-life balance

- Part-time work is already widespread among ageing workers, at least in a number of countries

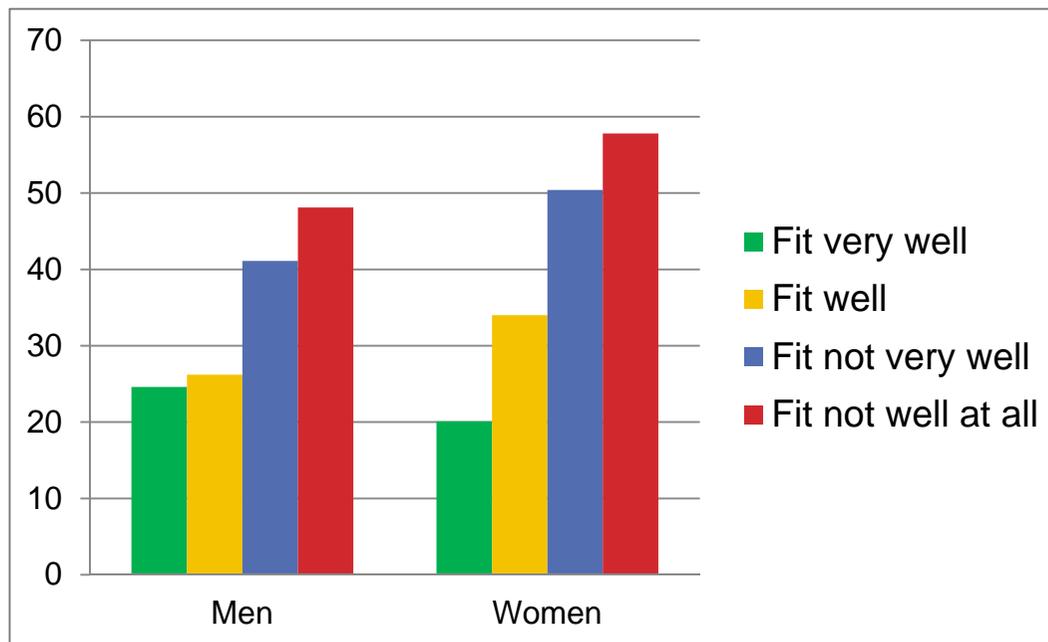


% of part-time employees among women aged 50-64, by country (EU28, Labour Force Survey, 2013)

- In the EU28 average, 9% of male employees and 34% of female employees over 50 are working part-time (against respectively 6% and 30% in the age group 25-49).

# Ageing, working time and work-life balance

- Unfavourable working hours arrangements have a negative impact on job sustainability

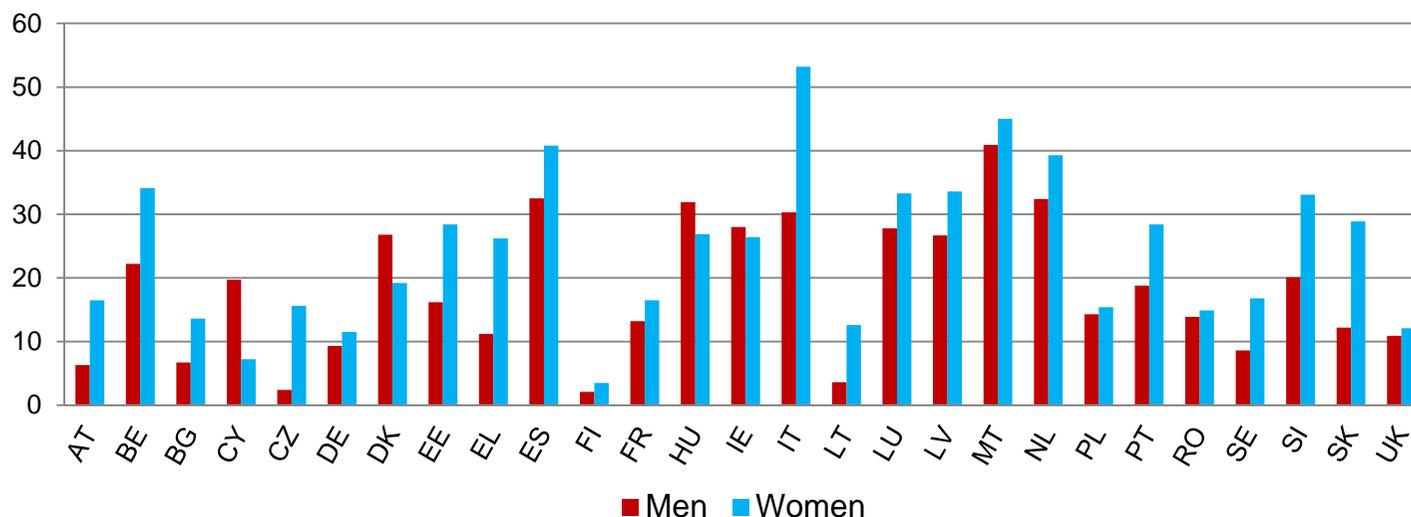


% of employees aged 50-59 who **do not think they will be able to do the same job when they are 60**, by how well their working hours fit non working-time (EU27, EWCS 2010)

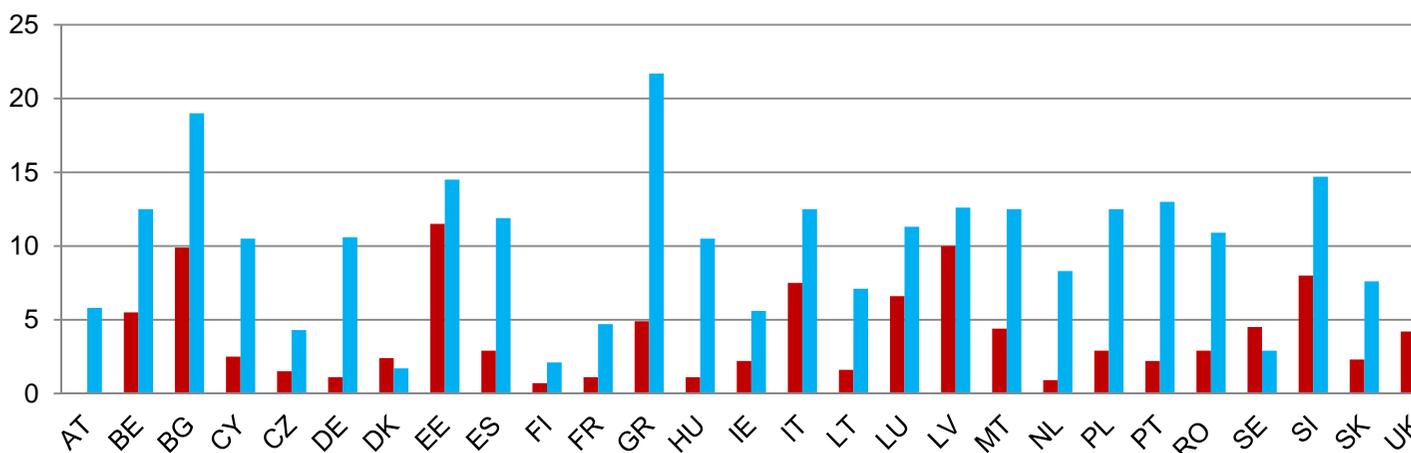
## Impacts of unpaid work on ageing workers

- Unequal repartition of domestic and caring tasks, also among employees aged over 50
  - More than 80% of women, but less than 30% of men, report spending at least 1h/day in housework and cooking
  - Caring for children or grandchildren becomes less unequally distributed over 50 than among the younger: 22% of women, 17% of men spend at least 1h/day
  - Care for elderly or disabled relatives becomes more frequent over 50, but still unequally distributed: 9% of women and 3% of men spend at least 1h/day
- Country comparisons: wide variations, due to strong influence of the institutional context (next slide)
- Health as an interaction between conditions of paid and unpaid work

# Impacts of unpaid work on ageing workers



% of employees aged 50 and over who spend at least 1h/day caring for **children or grandchildren** (EU27, EWCS 2010)



% of employees aged 50 and over who spend at least 1h/day caring for **elderly or disabled relatives** (EU27, EWCS 2010)

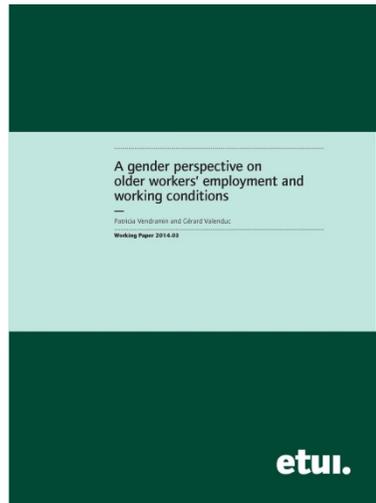
# Gendered effects of working longer

- More constraints on women than for men during career wind-down
  - Increasing proportion of ageing women becoming the main breadwinner of their household or living in one-adult household (and therefore less likely to leave the labour market)
    - Over 50% of female employees aged 60-64 being the main contributor to household income; over 25% of them living alone
  - Growing uncertainty concerning income and job stability (fear losing the current job and not being able to find another one)
  - Women's career paths at career wind-down reflect past fragmented careers, returns to employment, mobility and instability
    - Entailing disadvantages in 2<sup>nd</sup> pillar pension schemes
  - Gender gap between those (more often women) who have to work into old age to make up for fragmented careers and those (more often men) who can make an early exit rather comfortably

# Conclusions

- Back to the panel question: ageing workforce - is it possible without better working conditions ?
- Answer: generally no, and certainly not for all
  - Health at risk while ageing in several occupational groups including a high proportion of women, bot at the upper end of the skills scale (higher and intermediate professionals) and at the lower end (cleaners and domestic helpers, personal care employees)
  - Need for working time arrangements / reduction, and improvement of particular conditions of work-life balance at higher age
  - Women's trajectories more shaped than men's ones by unequal repartition of unpaid work
  - Increasing constraints for women at career wind-down

# Background



- EWCS study on "Sustainable work and the ageing workforce" (published by Eurofound in Nov 2012)

Patricia Vendramin, Gérard Valenduc (FTU), Anne-Françoise Molinié, Serge Volkoff (CEE-CREAPT), Michel Ajzen, Evelyne Léonard (UCL)

- ETUI Working paper 2014.03 "A gender perspective on older workers' employment and working conditions"

Patricia Vendramin, Gérard Valenduc

- ETUI Working paper 2012.09 "Occupations and ageing at work"

Patricia Vendramin, Gérard Valenduc