

Some reflections about sustainable work over the life course for men and women in Europe

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ETUI conference: Europe at the cross roads

Is it possible without better working conditions?

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Sustainable work: Able and willing to work until retirement age?

- Sustainability of work
- Tackling demographic change: more people at work for longer?
 - ▶ Sustainable work over the life course: try and ensure that more people can participate in the labour market and are able and willing to do so until a later age
 - ▶ It's the combination of different elements which make jobs sustainable
 - > multidimensional aspects of quality of work and employment
 - > certain effects can be evened out or build up over the working life
 - > changes throughout the working life: career management
 - ▶ Changes throughout the life course
 - >Critical life events: child bearing and rearing, unemployment spells,...
 - >Needs can change throughout life (need for transitions)

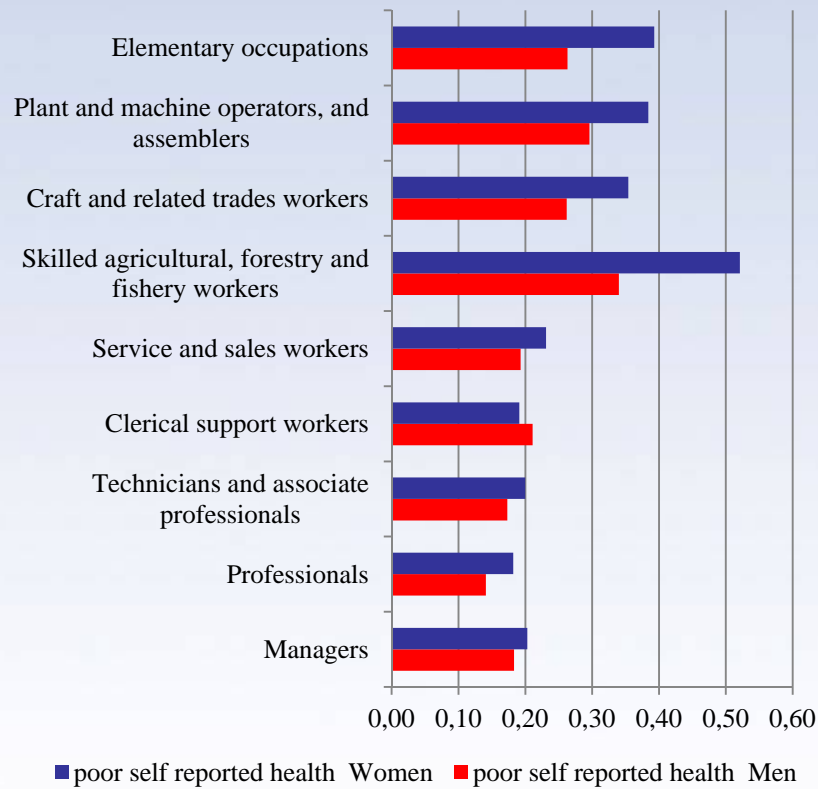


- Employment structure
 - ▶ More service industry, less agriculture and industry
 - ▶ EJM (eurofound) hollowing of the middle
different jobs with different skills requirements
 - ▶ High level of unemployment
 - ▶ Smaller working age population
- Globalisation, increase use of ICT and intensified competition have led organisations to become more ‘flexible’
 - ▶ Different types of organisations with different impact on workers as well as on the economy
 - ▶ ‘blurring frontiers’
 - ▶ Some concern over short term governance
- Increasing emphasis on skills development, « self management » by workers, employment security over job security

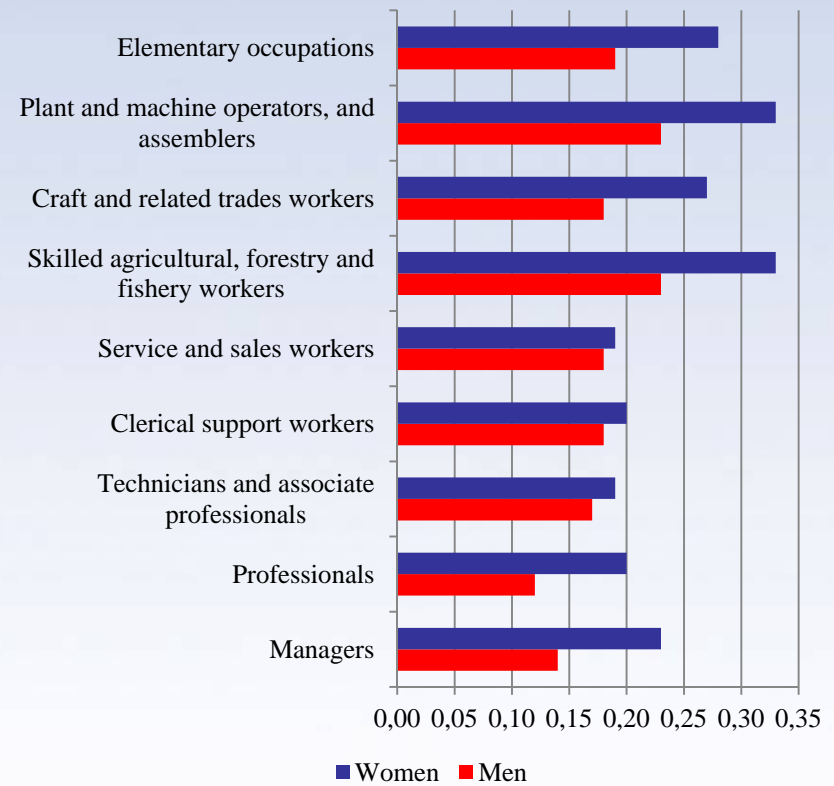
Old risks still exist and new emerge ... as inequalities

- Globally limited changes on working conditions
 - but increase in inequalities between groups of workers, work situations
- 20% of workers are in “at risk for their health” jobs
- A substantial proportion of workers are “trapped” in precarious employment situations
- More and more workers are exposed to psychosocial risks and ultimately health outcomes (MSDS and mental health issues) which can limit their opportunities for work as well as may lead to premature exit from the labour market
- Gender inequalities accumulate up :
 - ▶ Loss of female education and talent
 - ▶ Loss of male health;
- Important differences between occupations
- Increasingly older workers are exposed to working conditions hard to bear
- The development of learning organisations is decreasing

Poor self reported health



Low mental well being



Sustainable work? Factors which play a role (EWCS 2010)

- being able and willing to do the job until 60

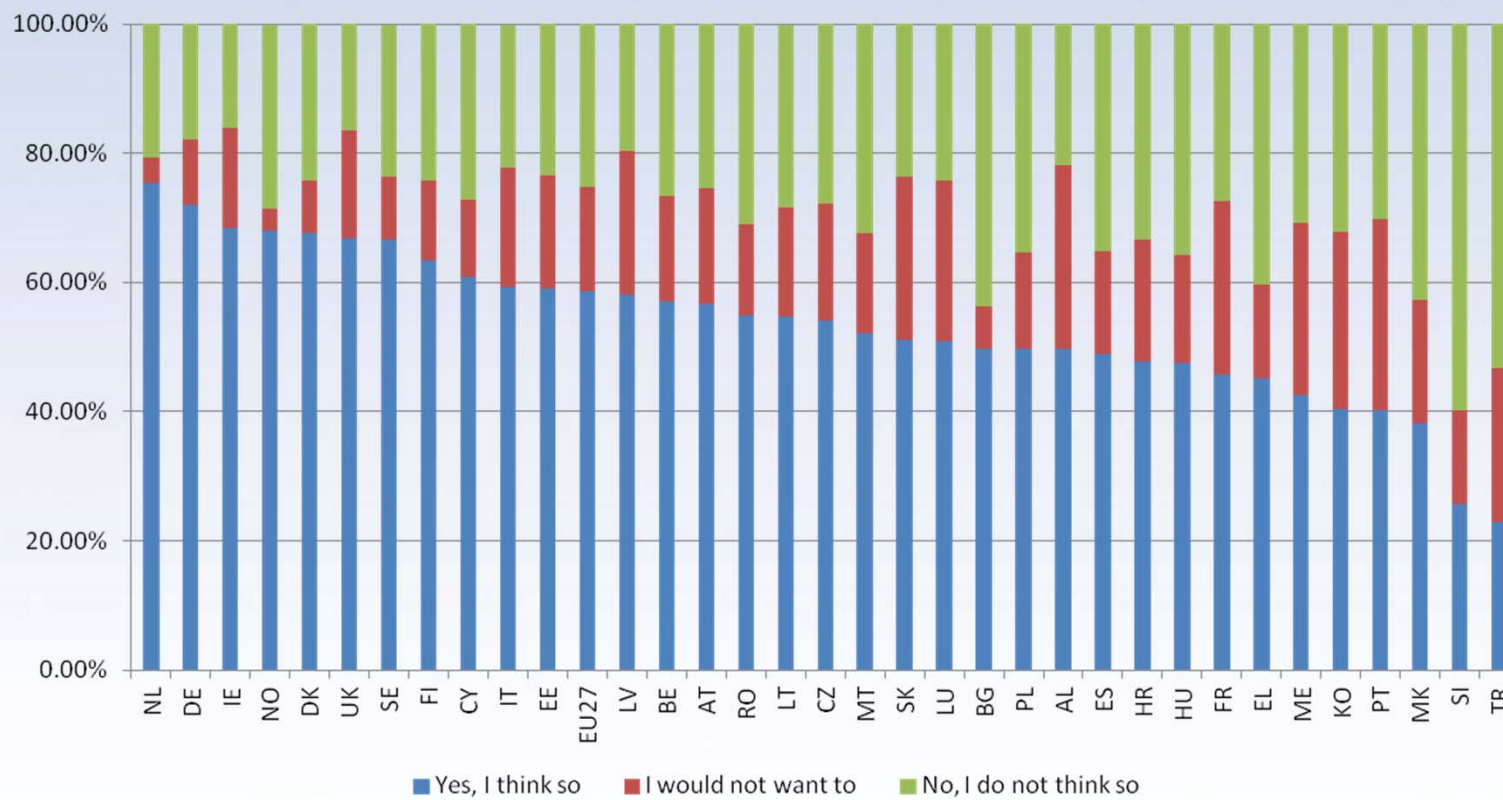
Important determinants:

- autonomy plays its protective role, work intensity its deterrent role.
 - ▶ Karasek is important (job strain - / active jobs +)
- work-life balance
 - ▶ Incl working time autonomy
- cognitive dimensions of work
- involvement in workplace organisation/innovation
- social support from colleagues and managers

- But also important : intrinsic rewards
- violence and harassment, exposure to ergonomic risks, job insecurity associated with lower levels of job sustainability



Able and willing to do the same job at 60 ?



CURRENT
WORKFORCE

High paid
good jobs

Well balanced
good jobs

JOB QUALITY

Earnings
Prospects
Intrinsic job quality
Working time quality

Poorly balanced
jobs

Low quality
jobs

characteristics
of the job

Maintain/improve
good job quality

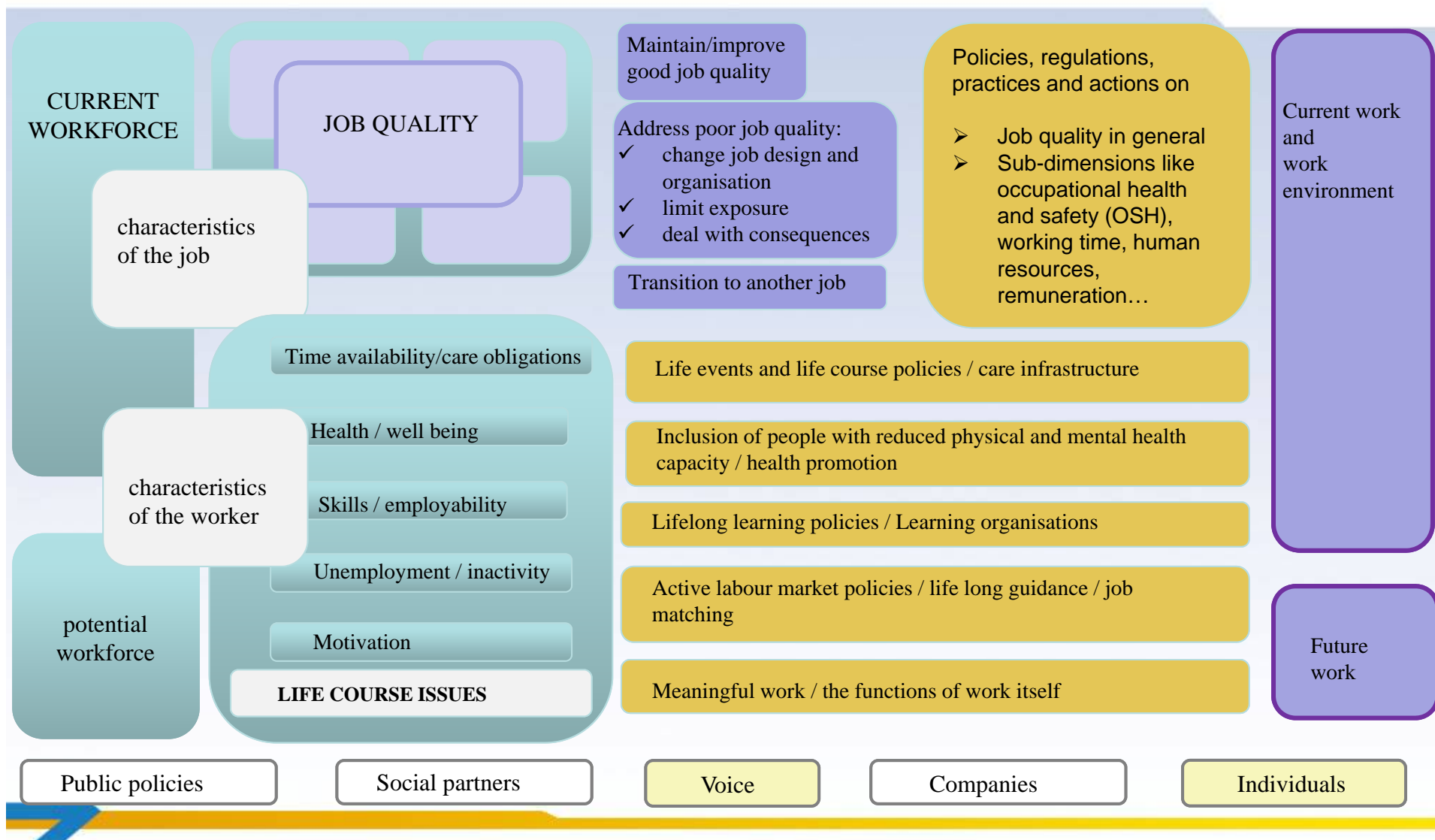
Address poor job
quality:

- ✓ change job design and organisation
- ✓ limit exposure
- ✓ deal with consequences

Transition to
another job



Sustainable work over the life course : Policies and actions to allow workers to work and continue to work



Some final reflections

- Sustainable work for men and women: important challenge for Europe (and EU2020 strategy)
 - ▶ There are high costs associated with the exhaustion of labour for all of society
 - ▶ There are benefits in developing capabilities of individuals and organisations
- Job quality – multidimensional - is an important dimension
 - ▶ Tackle issues esp for those workers who combine negative elements in all dimensions
- Changes in work organisation and HRM practices may be necessary
- Coherence of the actions and policies matter
 - ▶ Policies related to quality of work : from health and safety legislation to well-being at work policies, prevention programmes, working time policies (and arrangements), inclusion policies (age groups? Specific needs?) ... sometimes contradictory ...
 - ▶ Impact of recession (social systems + way we deal with these issues)
- Good job quality is key to contributing to smart, inclusive and sustainable growth
- Role for all actors: governments, companies, social partners, EU
 - ▶ Many solutions may be local or national
 - ▶ However creating the framework conditions / understanding the big picture are important ... as is monitoring, organising learning etc ...





Many thanks for your attention

More information:

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Job sustainability and working conditions

		Male	Female			Male	Female
Autonomy	Low	48	46	Posture related index	Low	77	69
	High	72	67		High	39	35
Work intensity	Low	64	61	Career development possibilities	Low	49	49
	High	51	50		High	66	64
Worker participation	Low	46	47	Work life balance	unfit	47	42
	High	70	65		fit	62	62
Work well done	Never	43	44	Learning new things	Low	49	49
	Always	63	60		High	63	60

